THE NATURE OF GOD AND HIS PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD

C.O.P.E.C. COMMISSION REPORT

VOL. I.

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THE NATURE OF GOD AND HIS PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD

C.O.P.E.C. COMMISSION REPORTS

Volume I.	The Nature of God and His Purpose for the World
„ II.	Education
„ III.	The Home
„ IV.	The Relation of the Sexes
„ V.	Leisure
„ VI.	The Treatment of Crime
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„ XI.	The Social Function of the Church
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THE NATURE OF GOD AND HIS PURPOSE FOR THE WORLD

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BASIS

The basis of this Conference is the conviction that the Christian faith, rightly interpreted and consistently followed, gives the vision and the power essential for solving the problems of to-day, that the social ethics of Christianity have been greatly neglected by Christians with disastrous consequences to the individual and to society, and that it is of the first importance that these should be given a clearer and more persistent emphasis. In the teaching and work of Jesus Christ there are certain fundamental principles—such as the universal Fatherhood of God with its corollary that mankind is God's family, and the law " that whoso loseth his life, findeth it "—which, if accepted, not only condemn much in the present organisation of society, but show the way of regeneration. Christianity has proved itself to possess also a motive power for the transformation of the individual, without which no change of policy or method can succeed. In the light of its principles the constitution of society, the conduct of industry, the upbringing of children, national and international politics, the personal relations of men and women, in fact all human relationships, must be tested. It is hoped that through this Conference the Church may win a fuller understanding of its Gospel, and hearing a clear call to practical action may find courage to obey.

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GENERAL PREFACE

THE present volume forms one of the series of Reports drawn up for submission to the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship, held in Birmingham in April 1924.

In recent years Christians of all denominations have recognised with increasing conviction that the commission to "go and teach all nations" involved a double task. Alongside of the work of individual conversion and simultaneously with it an effort must be made to Christianise the corporate life of mankind in all its activities. Recent developments since the industrial revolution, the vast increase of population, the growth of cities, the creation of mass production, the specialisation of effort, and the consequent interdependence of individuals upon each other, have given new significance to the truth that we are members one of another. The existence of a system and of methods unsatisfying, if not antagonistic to Christian life, constitutes a challenge to the Church. The work of a number of pioneers during the past century has prepared the way for the attempt to examine and test our social life in the light of the principles revealed in Jesus Christ, and to visualise the requirements of a Christian civilisation. Hitherto such attempts have generally been confined to one or two aspects of citizenship; and, great as has been their value, they have plainly shown the defects of

sectional study. We cannot Christianise life in compartments: to reform industry involves the reform of education, of the home life, of politics and of international affairs. What is needed is not a number of isolated and often inconsistent plans appropriate only to a single department of human activity, but an ideal of corporate life constructed on consistent principles and capable of being applied to and fulfilled in every sphere.

The present series of Reports is a first step in this direction. Each has been drawn up by a Commission representative of the various denominations of British Christians, and containing not only thinkers and students, but men and women of large and differing practical experience. Our endeavour has been both to secure the characteristic contributions of each Christian communion so as to gain a vision of the Kingdom of God worthy of our common faith, and also to study the application of the gospel to actual existing conditions—to keep our principles broad and clear and to avoid the danger of Utopianism. We should be the last to claim any large or general measure of success. The task is full of difficulty: often the difficulties have seemed insurmountable.

But as it has proceeded we have discovered an unexpected agreement, and a sense of fellowship so strong as to make fundamental divergences, where they appeared, matters not for dispute but for frank and sympathetic discussion. Our Reports will not be in any sense a final solution of the problems with which they are concerned. They represent, we believe, an honest effort to see our corporate life

steadily and whole from the standpoint of Christianity; and as such may help to bring to many a clearer and more consistent understanding of that Kingdom for which the Church longs and labours and prays.

However inadequate our Reports may appear—and in view of the magnitude of the issues under discussion and the infinite grandeur of the Christian gospel inadequacy is inevitable—we cannot be too thankful for the experience of united inquiry and study and fellowship of which they are the fruit.

It should be understood that these Reports are printed as the Reports of the Commissions only, and any resolutions adopted by the Conference on the basis of these Reports will be found in *The Proceedings of C.O.P.E.C.*, which also contains a General Index to the series of Reports.

LIST OF COMMISSION MEMBERS

The Commission responsible for the production of this Report was constituted as follows :—

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* Miss Dougall co-operated in the work of the Commission up to the time of her death, and her colleagues wish to express their indebtedness to her.

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CHAPTER I

GOD IN CHRIST

CHAPTER I

GOD IN CHRIST

"WHAT is this? A new doctrine. With authority He commands the powers of evil and they obey Him." "This man speaks with authority and not like the Rabbis." His originality and certainty are characteristic of the first impression made by Jesus Christ upon His contemporaries. And modern studies, which have done so much to interpret the records of His ministry, enable us to recover something of the surprise and hope of His earliest hearers, and to verify in our own experience their conviction that "never man spake as this man." In the world of to-day, a world bewildered alike by the complexity of its problems and by its own apparent inability to solve them, there is manifest a growing and wistful desire for guidance. Amidst the clamour of warnings and predictions and policies, men and women are straining their ears to catch the authentic note of one who sees and can declare the way out of chaos, of one who can recall them to the eternal Beauty and Truth and Goodness, of one whose sincerity and confidence carry instant conviction. In their growing anxiety they are quick to seek security even in outworn superstitions or upstart creeds. As in the ancient world, which in so large a measure resembles our own day, there are false

Christs and false prophets in abundance and the people are drawn after them. But in the inevitable disillusionment which is following the upheavals and dreams, the experiments and disappointments of the past decade, there is, we believe, a growing desire to hear and follow Jesus, which summons those who are called by His name to reveal and substantiate their claim on His behalf.

It is the purpose of this Report to set out plainly, and with reference to the life of to-day, what Christians of all denominations have received and hold in common from their common Lord. They believe, and the experience of late years deepens their conviction, that in Him and His good news of God lies the way to the understanding and the right use of life in all its manifold aspects and activities. And as a preliminary to the detailed discussion of Christian citizenship, they would attempt to define and explain the principles from the application of which their concrete proposals are derived.

It was the note of authority which first drew men and women to Jesus. Before Him, and not least among His own compatriots, there had been seers and prophets, men who had felt and helped to satisfy the hunger for God, and who, in so doing, had been inspired to reveal for their own and succeeding generations the eternal values, and to show them how to live eternally. In Jesus the partial glimpses and incomplete messages of the past found their fulfilment. He and He alone fully knew God and revealed Him : such is His own claim, and such the experience of His followers. Here was a

declaration of the Divine nature and purpose fresh and arresting, congruous with human aspiration, and infinitely enriching to human life. Those who had ears to hear and eyes to see, heard an interpretation of the ways of God with man, and of the response of man to God, which carried its own conviction, and saw a character perfectly illustrating the fullness of the teaching, a life worthily representing man to God, and God to man. And as they heard and saw, and still more when the whole revelation had been brought to its focussing point at Calvary, they found in it not only illumination but power, not only example but redemption. The old passed away—or rather it became new—and in the change was manifested God. For these men and women there was henceforth no doubt or fear, but only love and faith and hope. They were themselves transformed, and in them was liberated a Spirit who knit them into organic fellowship one with another, and by them continued their Master's redemptive work. He, not merely as teacher and pattern, but as living comrade, was the source and goal of their new emotion and new thinking and new activity. For them Jesus Christ was the Saviour, and because Saviour, also Lord and God. All things were theirs, for they were Christ's, and Christ was God's.

And the testimony of the eye-witnesses has been confirmed by a growing weight of Christian experience throughout the centuries. Men and women of all nations and languages, of all times and stations, learned and simple, robust and suffering, speculative and practical, have found their satisfaction in Him, and in Him have entered upon fresh and fuller life.

Incarnate at a particular time and place, He appeals universally, meeting the needs and receiving the worship of humanity in all its representative types, from the child who announces that He came "to put a face on God," to the thinker who sees in the drama of His passion and resurrection the clear expression of a pattern which he dimly traces interwoven in the very woof and warp of the universe.

To attempt to condense into a few pages what the generations of Christendom have found in Him is a task impossible of accomplishment. For our own purpose it will be enough to note four main headings of His word and work: its revelation of God, its conception of man's nature, its vision of man's calling, its manifestation of power to fulfil that calling. These four can be expressed in the four words, Fatherhood, personality, sacrifice and fellowship.

(A) Fatherhood

Light on the nature of God and His purpose for the world may come to man through all the avenues of experience. God discloses Himself in many ways, and some respond to one kind of appeal, some to another. Not a few mystics, poets and scientists find God more readily in Nature, or in the rare atmosphere of pure thought, than in concrete action and human life. They shrink from the personal, and fear to limit the infinity of the all-pervading by the ascription of attributes necessarily relative and anthropomorphic. Others, bewildered by the difficulty of reconciling a credal religion with what they know of the universe, yet find in their own conscious-

ness of right and wrong a guide for life. Humanity can show few characters more heroic than those who thus without faith fling themselves into "the lost fight of virtue." Such men are in fact living by Christian standards which they do not consciously trace to Christ. They approach God in Christ through experience of God as the object of all thought. But whether the first knowledge of God worthy of the name comes to a man through seeing God in Jesus, or whether a man's faith in Christ be regarded as a supplement to his belief in God, all Christians, whatever their differences in temperament, find in Christ the ultimate standard of their trust in God and their hope for mankind. For us as Christians, God is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and the value and destiny of men must be judged in the light of Christ's attitude towards them. We turn then to the Gospels that we may learn how to think of God and His purpose for the world.

And surely we are justified in so doing. Whatever be the ultimate truth, if "God has many Words for many worlds," we, while we are human and on earth, can find our highest concept of Deity only when the eternal is translated for us into the terms of our humanity. If we go to the masters of human thought for our philosophy and science, to the masters of creative art for our literature and music, if the expert has a right to be heard, then to reject in religion the revelation of One who was "defined to be the Son of God by power in accordance with the Spirit of holiness" is to be false to the method of sound study. And if we are to deal fairly with

what is set before us in Jesus Christ, we must test it by attempting to interpret all our experience in the light of it. It has been said of William James' psychology that he endeavoured to explain the psychical from the physical, the consciousness of men from the movements of the brain and action of the nerves; and that when he had pushed explanations in terms of the physical as far as they would go he came to the point where he had to admit, and where he frankly and gladly admitted, some independent spiritual reality. The critic who so describes his work adds that he ought not to have been content with recognising the independence of the spiritual at one or two points, but that, having admitted it somewhere, he should have gone back over the whole ground again, and asked whether his physiological explanations were really satisfying. Having admitted the spiritual somewhere, he should have looked for it everywhere. We are in like case with the revelation in Jesus Christ. Here God is convincingly present, even when we seem to look in vain for Him elsewhere. But if we become conscious of God in Christ, then we have to interpret all our experience religiously, and expect to find God where at first we thought He was not. So the coming of Christ gives a new assurance, a new certainty to our faith in the Fatherhood of God.

We may note, in the first place, that God is supremely real in the experience of Jesus. To Him the amazing thing was the poverty of men's faith. "He marvelled because of their unbelief." We are amazed at His absolute confidence. "He was," as the Puritan Father, Goodwin, said, "the first and

greatest believer that ever lived." What is to most of us at best a fleeting vision, often forgotten and often denied, a vision which has too little in common with our everyday life, was to Him an abiding certainty, the fact of which His whole life was a testimony. It is the evidence of His perfect union with God, confirming His claim to an unique Sonship, that led His disciples, men whose whole heredity and training prejudiced them against such a confession, to acclaim Him " Lord of all." The experience of the centuries, enshrined in the belief and creeds of Christendom, warrants us in " looking to Jesus, the author and fulfiller of our faith "—Jesus who revealed in its perfection that of which prophets and saints have seen glimpses and told as best they could, Jesus who took up and enriched and completed the work of the ages.

The foundation of " the social gospel " is the fact that this God, whose thoughts and ways so clearly are not as ours, is none the less our Father. This truth is finally established in the revelation of the Father in His Son. The attitude of Jesus Christ towards His own mission, towards the external work of Nature and towards mankind is determined by the truth of the Fatherhood of God everywhere and in all relationships. Not everything that happens in the natural order or in human society is in accordance with God's will: that will is not yet done on earth as it is in heaven. But the material world is not in itself evil. The creation is good. " Jesus passed on, not as through a wilderness where all is ownerless and homeless, save the thread of way itself, but as through His Heavenly Father's domain.

Wherever He trod, He took possession and exercised authority in His Father's name." The revelation of the love of God is not an aspect of the life of Jesus, nor yet specially associated with some aspect of His life. It is the whole significance of His life. His whole work is to reveal the Father's love.

Nor is the Fatherhood of God as revealed in and by Jesus a merely passive relationship of benevolent interest or patient expectation. God does not simply wait for us to recognise and return to Him. He seeks us out with a love that will not despair nor let us go. Jesus, alike by what He said and did and by what He was, reveals the resources of the Father's love; His followers recognised in Him the divine initiative—"God so loved that He gave" and "He that spared not His own Son, shall He not with Him give us all things?" It is from this conviction of the invincible activity of the Father ("My Father worketh") that Christians draw their hope. They are called to attempt great things; they can undertake their task if they also expect great things. If, as Herrmann wrote, "Our communion with God rests upon God's communion with us," then indeed we should not shrink from our calling, nor be dismayed at what it involves; "for it is God that worketh in us" and for us.

(B) Personality

More important for our immediate purpose is the character of God's Fatherhood as revealed in the attitude of Jesus towards men. We may note first His interest in men as men. It is true that His own

ministry was confined to the Jews; but the appeal of His teaching is universal. The study of the actual historic circumstances which determine the immediate reference of His sayings is very illuminating, but seldom indispensable to the understanding of their essential spirit. He took the spiritual and moral treasures of Israel and made them available for mankind. He stripped the great prophetic teachings of particularist accretions and associations and brought them within reach of the humblest sincere soul. Man as man was the object of His care. If not a sparrow falls without our Father, clearly we may not despise one of God's little ones. Jesus devoted Himself to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. By the lost sheep we may understand the Galilean crowds who appeared to Him as sheep without a shepherd and on whose ignorance and helplessness He had compassion. The crowds whom it is so easy for us to condemn, He could not but pity.

Yet the multitude was to Him never a mere generalisation. It is often declared in Scripture that God is no respecter of persons, that He "looketh upon the heart," not upon the disguise which masks it. Jesus in all His dealings with mankind, in answering the questions, resolving the doubts, and meeting the needs of humanity, goes straight to the innermost reality of the self. He strips those who come to Him of their pretences, their formalisms and conventions, and deals directly with the individual, recognising and sympathising with the peculiarities, the temperament and circumstances of each. Respect for men's intellectual and

moral selves is an essential characteristic of His method. He would not override men's judgments. He would not compel either their faith or their service. His constant appeal to His hearers' sense of right and wrong; His answers to the demand, "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly," and the question, "Is it lawful to pay tribute?"; His refusal to work a sign from heaven: His avoidance of publicity for His miracles; His refusal of earthly kingship; His insistence on would-be disciples counting the cost—all these features of the Gospel story point to His resolve that men should face realities for themselves. He demanded sincerity and cared only for a loyalty based on conviction. The appeals to mass emotion on which we are so often tempted to rely, He never trusted. Judged by standards that have often been accepted in the Church, her Lord was not a successful preacher. The training of the Twelve was more important than the public ministry. It is difficult to say which evokes the deeper wonder—the friendship which Jesus lavished on the first disciples, or the confidence He reposed in them when He trusted His work and His message to their loyalty and discernment. The Mohammedan will sometimes twit the Christian on the ground that the latter possesses no authentic writing of his prophet. Jesus did not put His gospel into a book as Mohammed did. But then Mohammed did not believe in man's capacity to respond to God's grace as Jesus did.

The significance of His valuation of womanhood and childhood has often been pointed out, though it has only very slowly been understood by the Church.

Yet the true emancipation of women, even now incomplete, and the care and reverence for children, characteristic of the modern world, are steps in a revolution which Jesus began when the disciples marvelled to find Him talking with a woman about religion by the well in Sychar, and when He taught them that they must become as little children if they would enter the Kingdom. Here too Jesus established the true human values based on God's Fatherhood.

Respect for the image of God in every man carries with it the championship of the poor and oppressed and the care for the fallen. The social divisions of the present do not correspond exactly to the stratification of ancient society; but it is clear that in the outward circumstances of His life Jesus was more closely associated with the poor and simple than with the rich and influential, and by that very fact He pulled down the mighty from their seat and exalted the humble and meek. To wealth and rank, to political influence and military power, to learning and formal piety, He seemingly attached but little value. He spoke much of their moral dangers, and said nothing of the advantages which it is constantly assumed belong to them. He thought that men who possessed little or none of these things were more favourably situated for sharing in and advancing the Kingdom of God than those who had many such possessions. The Kingdom He came to establish was independent of such aids. This in itself involves a revolution in values which His followers have found it hard to accept. The breach between Jesus and the Pharisees was in no small degree bound

up with His association with publicans and sinners. If " the lost sheep " may stand for the masses of the people, they may also be more particularly identified with the social outcasts and the morally despairing. Mr. Montefiore has emphasised the importance of this aspect of the ministry of Jesus in the following terms :

" This we may regard as a new, important and historic feature in His teaching. And it is just here that opposition comes in and begins. To call sinners to repentance, to denounce vice generally, is one thing. To have intercourse with sinners and seek their conversion by countenancing them and comforting them, that is quite another thing. Did not all respectable persons pray and resolve to keep far from bad companions, to avoid the dwelling-place of the wicked ? How can one keep the law of God if one associates with sinners ? "

This treatment of the erring is fundamental to an understanding of the love and righteousness of God. " Scarcely anything made Him so indignant as lack of love towards the fallen." " This is the vital difference between Jesus and the Pharisees, between goodness which bears the sinner's burden, and says, ' Come unto Me, and I will give you rest,' and goodness which has no sympathy with the sinner, which bears no burden for him, which says, ' Stand by thyself ; come not near me, for I am holier than thou.' Pharisaic goodness has no redemptive power in it just because it has no love in it and bears no burden : the sinner is not moved by it except to curse it, and in doing so he shows at least some sense of what goodness is. For God also

curses it as a wicked slander upon Himself." In His life Jesus exhibited, as by His death He established, the standards of a true humanity.

No form of human need lay outside the range of Christ's interests. It has been suggested that He was specially alive to the sufferings inflicted by hunger. It is certain that He fed the hungry and healed the sick. He likewise adopted as His brethren the hungry and the naked, the sick and the sorrowing, the persecuted and the criminal. He comforted and relieved men's outward necessities. Yet undoubtedly men felt that His care for them began where their care for themselves was apt to leave off. He saw that the forgiveness of sins rather than the restoration of the body was the more urgent need of the paralytic. He knew that men do not and cannot live by bread alone. A famine of God's Word is more serious than a failure of the wheat harvest. He taught us to seek first God's kingdom, in the confidence that our practical problems about food and raiment would be solved if we had a single eye to God's service. He came to enable us to realise our highest happiness, through the acceptance of God's rule.

Christ's sense of values is set forth in the Lord's prayer with its invocation of the common Father. The rest of the prayer is the expansion of all that is implied in this phrase. It declares man's first need to be reverence for that Name of "Father"; for when he lifts up his soul to it, he finds his soul as a child of God. His next need is the acceptance of God's Kingdom, which is not Utopia, but a state of life in which God's will is fully done, which

means working out the eternal things of faith, hope and love, in our relations with one another. When these spiritual foundations have been laid, and when material things have been thus subordinated to our souls' real good, we are in a position rightly to view the broad question: so too, when we are living in God's family, we are able to forgive and be forgiven, and to ask with sincere loyalty to be delivered from temptation to fall under the sway of evil.

(C) Sacrifice

Knowing what was in man and setting Himself to enable man to become a child of God, Jesus knew and proclaimed that the needful change was no small nor easy thing. To realise all that is involved in the Lord's Prayer, and to respond to its call, demands a transformation so radical as rightly to be called a second birth. Over and over again in His preaching and His actions, at the Last Supper and upon Calvary, Jesus enforced the same lesson that "whoso loseth his life findeth it." It is in our endurance that we shall gain possession of our souls: the disciple, like his Master, must take up a cross: the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, if it is to become fruitful. If man is made in the image of God, if, that is, man possesses, in however rudimentary a form, the possibility of recognising and responding to God, the possibility has been so obscured by ancestral habit and personal falsity that to recover it seems and is a task beyond our powers. Intellectual arrogance, social snobbery, and self-

dependence or self-assertiveness, estrange men from God and their brethren. A false humility, a sense of moral failure and incapacity, the consciousness of guilt make men hesitate to believe in God's love and enter His Kingdom. To free men from the grip of pride and fear, Jesus lived and died. If men could be saved by the law, as by the clear enunciation of philosophic principles, the historic incarnation would have been superfluous. But because God cares for the common people, the truth was embodied in a tale, to enter in at lowly doors. This may offend the philosopher; yet if he has the true child-spirit, which is also the true philosophic spirit, he will rejoice that God has revealed the truth to the babes. Nor is the truth embodied merely in a story. It is incarnate in a living person, of whom we say, He is the Truth. The truth in the person of Christ moves and saves, as abstract principles never could save and move men. It is the triumph of Christianity that its Master not only revealed to mankind its true nature and calling, but provided in Himself the means of achievement. Christ came not only to reveal and illuminate but to redeem and save. And though this salvation is the purpose of His whole life and ministry, it is in the Cross that its quality is supremely displayed, and from the Cross that its effects have supremely flowed.

This is not the place to enter upon any detailed discussion of this high mystery of our faith, or to examine the various metaphors and doctrines whereby the fact of Atonement has been interpreted. It is sufficient to state that Christians throughout the ages have found condensed in the story of Calvary

the fullest revelation of human sin and Divine love, and the source of power and life.

Jesus Christ went up to Jerusalem to offer to His nation the same opportunity that He had given to the Galileans and to His disciples, to bring them the things that belonged to their peace. He came unto His own, proclaiming to them God and their place in God's family. And His own received Him not. There is the judgment of this world. Men condemned God, and in so doing revealed their own state and its significance. Thus regarded, the Cross startles men out of their easy self-satisfaction and their contentment with low aims, by demonstrating the petty self-indulgences, the half-recognised sins, as the cause of the suffering of the Holy One and the Just. For the Cross reveals the true character of sin, as it appears in the fact of vicarious suffering. We choose wrongly and others, our nearest and best-loved, suffer for our mistake. The innocent are crucified by the sins, the blindnesses and prejudices, the betrayals and lapses, of others. Individual error results in corporate suffering. It is doubtful whether there is any sin the effects of which can be confined to the sinner himself: others pay, God Himself pays, the penalty for our self-love. God in Christ suffers the effects, bears the burden, of our sins. Every wrong choice, every injury to another, all our wilful ignorance and perversity and rebellion, is a blow struck not only at our fellows but at God. If a man in any measure understands this, sin becomes intolerable, and his pride is broken. St. Paul, contemplating himself in the light of Calvary, must cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me

out of the body of this death?" He can, however, add, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

For the revelation of sin is not all. We might be left in despair if we did not find also in the Cross the assurance of forgiveness and the power to overcome. And this is what men have found there. Though we betray and crucify, yet God's answer is what Christ shows it to be. He not only suffers, He does not cease to love. Love is an ambiguous word, as we know. To many it implies mere emotion, to others little more than a vague general good-will or a feeling of cold respect. Kant thought that "to love one's enemies" meant "to believe them capable of reform." It has been difficult for Christians to attain even to that lowly standard; but it is certain that so limited an expression of love has only a limited power of redemption in it. Neither a mere sentiment of good-will nor a cheerless dutiful hopefulness for others is Love. Only in the Cross of Christ do we learn the true measure of love and find it measureless. For here is "love to the loveless shown that they may lovely be." "God commends His own love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Later, St. Paul adds, "while we were enemies"; and recent experience has underlined such love. It is love for a moral end, not to save man from physical peril or spiritual suffering, but to undermine his pride and overcome his fears, to enable his repentance and to transform his sorrow into joy. The familiar words of the Crucified are symbolic of the meaning of His death: "Father, forgive them,"

assures us that, being what we are, we can still arise and return to Him : " this day with Me in paradise," that union with God in Christ is the secret of the new life : " Mother, behold thy son," that this new life involves a new relationship between all those who share it. For love thus revealed must needs call out whatever we have of humble reverence, of gratitude, of devotion. We can, we must, love Him who so loved us.

And our love, thus evoked and thus bestowed, is no mere memory of a dead Lord. Calvary is completed in Easter, in the Ascension, and in Pentecost. When the disciples had passed through the fire of self-loathing and self-contempt, when they had learned the quality of their Master by its contrast with their own, then the ideal became a living presence, the example of a perfect love, a risen and abiding Lover. Henceforward their communion with Him was to be unending, indestructible. As He was in the Father, so were they in Him. " Jesus lives " was their message : " I live, yet not I ; Christ lives in me," was its consequence. Thus they were made new. Self-centred motives, ambitions and fears were driven out. There was no room left for self in face of the all-absorbing reality of God in Christ. Love had cast out fear and every other selfish thing. By love, their love responding to His, they were transformed in heart and mind and will. And being united with Him they were united with one another. In the fellowship of His body they shared His life, His Spirit ; and in it could undertake and carry on His redemptive work.

(D) Fellowship

The essence of social obligation abides in the fact that, in loving our fellows, we love God in them, since they are His children; and in seeking their real good we seek God's will. This real good of man consists in acceptance of God's rule, since only thus do men realise their status as His children, and discover the meaning of their own lives. Then they become sons of God, members of His family, capable of living for those things of God which concern that human spirit which is made in His image, and which is eternal. This acceptance of God's rule means bringing our wills into agreement with the will of God. Agreement between our will and that of another brings with it feelings of reinforcement and happiness; the consciousness of disagreement brings conflict and trouble, yet we cannot just seek agreement with other wills for the sake of the peace and comfort so secured. But so far as our agreement is real, so far, that is, as it springs out of our relationship with God, it will impel us always to the best. Fellowship, in the Christian sense, implies much more than amiability or popularity. It is permeated with the quality of Him from whom it is derived, with goodness and truth and beauty, and has for its purpose the ever-widening realisation of the eternal values in the life of time and space.

For this realisation of the requirements of a rightly ordered human life, the New Testament sets before us the three great doctrines of Individual Salvation, of the Kingdom of God, and of Eternal Life, which are in themselves three aspects of the complete

scheme, and involve living as the children of God, in the family of God and for the eternal things of God. There have been forms of religion almost exclusively interested in one alone of these aspects of spiritual life; interested either in personal edification, or in working for a better world, or in a future life. But we cannot have any one of these things truly apart from the others.

(*a*) Thus when we are concerned primarily about our own souls, we become self-centred, introspective, valetudinarian; precisely as when we are primarily concerned with our bodily health. We gain our souls truly only by forgetting ourselves and by living and working for a better world, and for the faith, hope and love to be realised through it.

(*b*) The doctrine of the Rule, or Kingdom of God, equally requires the other two factors. As we find it in the New Testament, it certainly meant that Christianity was intended to be first of all a new world-order. But the conception of this Kingdom is based on the belief that men are the children of God, spiritual creatures, and cannot live by bread alone. Love presupposes this valuation of man; and its exercise is conditioned by setting the same value as God does on pardon, holiness, truth and goodness. When we separate the idea of the Kingdom from this basis, we have, what is frequently found to-day, a mere claim, under humanitarian sanctions, for an equal division of worldly goods. A more equal division with regard to what these worldly goods can truly do for men both in respect of what men have and of what they have not, certainly is involved in a Christianising of life. But it

is one thing when we demand justice and consideration for our fellow-man as an immortal soul made in the image of God, and because we regard him as one among brethren living at God's table, where grasping as much as we can is as bad manners and morals as it would be at our earthly father's table; it is another thing to make these claims if we merely regard man as a superior animal living for a few years upon earth. If this be indeed his nature and destiny, we can hardly blame those who seize all the earthly good they can. Such acquisitiveness can only be wrong if there be a higher good which is thus lost. Moreover, we shall not live to see a wholly righteous social order; perhaps in our time it will not be improved at all. How are we to continue fighting for it with courage and endurance, unless we know that every betterment of human relations is an eternal good which is being taken up into the eternal divine order?

It is only on this basis that a true view of the brotherhood of humanity can be maintained. Apart from this, the employment of the phrase rests wholly on a basis of sentiment—a sentiment which is either a pathetic delusion or an obstinate camouflaging of the reality. Unless there is a Divine Being who as Father calls His own children unto Him, there is nothing to guarantee, control or inspire our sense of brotherhood one to another. Yet there is nothing commoner to-day than talk of "the brotherhood of man," which ignores or denies this necessary postulate. It is an ideal and guiding principle in much of the present-day agitation for social reform. It may confidently be claimed that much of the strength

of the appeal comes from the unacknowledged religious sentiments and instincts of mankind to whom it is addressed. And even those who, acknowledging only a materialistic basis for human life, make use of this conception are also trading on these elements of inherited belief which still linger in the dim recesses of their minds. The kinship of the common dust is no demonstration of brotherhood. From the same dust came the tiger and the snake. An equality of worthlessness robs the conception of all moral value. Brotherhood must derive from a spiritual source or it is nothing. The sense of brotherhood is a religious experience, otherwise it is an unsubstantial dream. It must be a recognition that the faith, hope, love and longing which we share are the inbreathing of the Spirit of our common Father. Even with regard to the outcasts of society, it must be a recognition, in such broken humanity, of infinite possibilities, of a still unsullied future in God. For it is only the brotherly love that is God-inspired that "hopeth all things." True brotherhood is a recognition that the origin and true destiny of all souls are in God. This alone leaps the barriers of class and race, enabling men to acknowledge the right of all to freedom in thought and action, to exercise mercy in individual and social dealings, to respect and reverence personality in all efforts to perfect education, to spend thought and love on human suffering and disease, in short to labour for social, moral and spiritual reforms.

(*c*) If we seek to isolate eternal life from the idea of the Kingdom, if we regard continued existence hereafter as an end in itself, then eternal life becomes

empty of meaning, being reduced to the level of mere continuance. The desire to inherit eternal life, if it be merely a desire to prolong one's existence, may become a purely self-regarding, even selfish aim, destructive of sound religion and good morals. In so far as we can form any worthy idea of a life hereafter, it is bound up with moral effort and spiritual fellowship here and now. When we are truly living for God's purpose in the world, we already have eternal life; and our awareness of things eternal enables us to handle aright things temporal. We can look at all our problems *sub specie æternitatis*. We can live and labour here and now in the power of an endless life, the gains of which do not pass.

The purpose of God, revealed in Christ, is thus essentially an eternal purpose. It is not only within the world but beyond it. The external world cannot satisfy us because God has "set eternity in our hearts." Any goal of human endeavour that can be completely realised on this earth is consequently not the ultimate aim of our existence here. If we accept this view, we can no longer regard material progress, a good world in the physical sense, as necessarily a main object of the Rule of God, nor can we regard the greatest comfort of the greatest number as necessarily the proper aim of Christian social reform. On the contrary, should the satisfaction of physical needs or the achievement of control over Nature be made the chief aim of human effort, civilisation will by this fact have ceased to serve its true end in the Divine plan and will inevitably meet with disaster. Such a view of the signifi-

cance of the world as lying beyond itself, underlies the message of the prophets, and is also central for the revelation of Jesus Christ. All these taught that God rules the world for His own transcendent ends, and that nothing in it will work for good as long as we act on any other basis. On the other hand, once this eternal meaning is acknowledged, even what we call evil will work for good to them that love God and who are called according to His purpose.

If the purpose of God for mankind goes beyond this world and is only to be realised in "that city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God," yet it is to be realised with ever-increasing fullness within the world. It involves all the possibilities of real progress in human history on this planet. Both here and hereafter God's purpose for us is an unfolding purpose. The very fact that Christianity grows out of Judaism, and that Christ is the consummation of the growing revelation through the prophets, means that God's purpose is an increasing purpose that runs through all the ages. Thus it comes about that Christianity is the only great religion which is not antagonistic but sympathetic to the idea of creative evolution; and Christianity is the final religion of mankind, just because the finality it claims is not the static finality of Islam or Buddhism, just because it is essentially a religion of expanding horizons. In the Gospel according to St. John, Jesus teaches His followers to look for greater things which they shall do because He goes to the Father, and to expect through the Holy Spirit those further revelations of truth for which they were not ready in His lifetime. Thus

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the hope of social progress is rooted in Christianity, and it is a hope which no Utopia can satisfy, for the things that await us both here and hereafter it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive. Because the love of God is constant and changeless, His wisdom is richly varied, His providence a mystery and His ways past finding out. For this same reason Christianity is incurably romantic as well as impenitently utilitarian; and life on this earth for the children of God is not the outworking of some mechanical scheme, nor yet simply a time of training in a preparatory school, but a splendid adventure and voyage of discovery.

CHAPTER II

GOD AND NATURE

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If we are to understand the principles of Christian social life and are to see how those principles can be made operative in a material environment, we must first consider the view of Nature and of the material world which they involve; we cannot dismiss the problem of the relationship of God to the universe unrecognised or unexamined. For there can be little doubt that the vast expansion in human knowledge of the natural order during the past century, while it has enriched the material life and enlarged the physical resources of mankind, has also done much to obscure the sense of moral values, to paralyse the energies and crush the aspirations.

It is not the business of this Report to attempt a complete apologetic or even an outline of Christian philosophy. But it is necessary for us to answer certain difficulties which have been raised, especially by natural science, because the greatest hindrance to an application of Christianity is the vague idea that it is no longer possible for us to live within the same spiritual horizon as Jesus and to keep His spiritual values.

(A) The Chief Difficulties

1. *The vastness of the material universe.*—What was true of the microcosm of Judæa in the first

century or of the pre-Copernican universe appears less evidently adequate in the macrocosm of our day. The change of scale terrifies us into wondering whether anything of the old can still remain for our use.

To claim that God is our Father and that His characteristic attribute is that of creative love seems incompatible with much of what we know of the universe, of the natural world and of its inhabitants. To the contemporaries of Jesus the world was after all a small and comparatively homely place, a few hundred miles of earth and sea, overarched with the dome of heaven, encircled with ocean and resting upon the abyss. Those whose outlook was confined to the favoured lands around the Mediterranean might well take a comfortable and comforting view of man's place and destiny in the scheme of things. It was less difficult to believe that God took a personal interest in each of His human children when the number of His family was limited, when humanity stood alone and aloof from the animal creation, and when the world had no rivals in the solar system or in space. To the modern student with his microscope and telescope, the whole conception of such a God, and in particular the belief in an incarnation, is apt to seem ridiculously parochial. He feels sympathy with the philosopher who likened the Christians of his day to a company of frogs croaking in the reeds round a pond in honour of the bull-frog deity. Christianity strikes him as naïvely anthropomorphic, an impertinent exaggeration of man's place in Nature, a delusion inconsistent with the size and majesty of the universe, with the

revelations of astronomy and biology, and with the facts of cruelty and struggle apparent in the evolutionary process. For him the world is seen against the vastnesses of interstellar space, a subsidiary planet of an unimportant star; mankind is the transient product of forces which have developed his physical organism from lower forms of life and his mind and soul (whatever this may be) out of animal instincts and primitive needs; the individual, despite his pathetic belief in his own importance, is only one among many myriads, the creature of heredity and environment, incapable even at his highest of the knowledge of reality. It is little wonder that when first given a glimpse of the teaching of modern science most of us should be shaken in our faith. Jesus no doubt thought of God as His Father, and impressed His disciples with the possibility of such a belief: can we, in view of the astronomy and geology, the chemistry and physiology, the anthropology and psychology of to-day, share His optimism and His hope?

2. *The indifference of Nature.*—But it is not mainly or chiefly on the ground of the age and size and complexity of the universe that the scientific student finds it hard to accept creative love as its ground and source. His objections come rather from the apparent absence in inorganic nature of any moral meaning, and among living organisms from the evidence of cruelty and suffering, and in man from the facts of triumphant evil and of the afflictions of the innocent, the wreckage wrought by disease and the tragedies of mental and moral insanity. Striking examples of each of these lines of criticism

are not simply the stock-in-trade of the atheist lecturer in Hyde Park: they must often wring the heart and strain the loyalty of the devoted Christian. A great ship strikes an iceberg or a great city is devastated by an earthquake; and the cry is raised, "Can this be the workmanship of love?" We read of the activities of the liver-fluke or the nuptials of the praying mantis, or the habits of the kea or the cuckoo, and are tempted to follow the Gnostics and ascribe the creation of the material world to the devil. War involves half humanity; and homes are desolated and lives, the lives of the young and innocent, are sacrificed, and the promise of a generation destroyed; and from hearts tortured with anguish we call to God to intervene; and there is apparently no voice nor any that answers. In sunshine and health and prosperity it may be easy to say "Our Father"; but to keep the faith of a little child in a world full of calamity and struggle and agony and sin is surely to live in a fool's paradise. Does not the evidence force us to abate our claims? Can we seriously believe in and work for a Kingdom of God in a world like ours, being what we are? Can we regard this earth as we know it as being the sort of home in which a loving Father could place His children? Can we reconcile our faith in God the Father with our faith in Him as Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? Can we accept the theology of Jesus? Or if not, have we any right to assume that His principles will give us guidance that can properly be followed?

3. *The problem of Evolution.*—These two difficulties, although accentuated by the scientific

movement, have been felt since the dawn of human thought, and are familiar to those who have no special knowledge of the modern outlook. But we have to face not merely bewilderment and more or less reverent agnosticism, but definite theories of the nature of the universe and the evolution of species, which leave little room for Christianity or even for theism. The attack upon the *Origin of Species* was at first directed either against the facts on which Darwin based his conclusions or against the whole scientific movement; and this misguided zeal prejudiced the whole position. The controversy created the belief that science and religion were irreconcilable enemies, a belief largely responsible for the form in which the problem of evolution still presents itself. For in the heat of argument neither side could look at the data impartially or completely. Science became for a time strongly materialistic, and Christians tended to take refuge in obscurantism. As a result there was and still is a wide acceptance of theories involving the beliefs that the order of the world is one of fixed and mechanical law, that the variation of living organisms is accidental and their survival determined by elimination, and that the idea of purposeful creation must be replaced by that of cosmic process. Such views cannot be neglected by those who look to Christianity to supply the motive power for social reconstruction; for they challenge the security of the foundations upon which that hope rests. Can we, in weighing the evidence which has forced the modern world to accept in one form or another the doctrine of evolution, reconcile that doctrine

with our belief in love and freedom, in eternal values, in revelation and redemption?

Such objections have not been without importance. Indeed the chief gain of our time is that they have enforced upon us a new investigation of the teaching of Jesus Christ and a deeper consideration of what is involved in His attitude towards the universe. We turn first to His teaching, and will then develop the reply which in the light of it we would make to these questions.

(B) The Teaching of Jesus

1. *No conception of God is more infinite than the conception of Jesus.*—This appreciation of the size and majesty, the riches and complexity of the universe, does not in itself affect in any way the interpretation which Jesus gave to it. No doubt those who search for Pan are always liable to panic when they approach him. Astronomical space and geological time may crush and terrify. Yet we are not the less men because this planet of ours may be but one among a million others: we are not the less men if our bodies consist of a million separate cells or if a million lower forms of life have prepared the way for our coming. The moral values, the reality of truth and goodness and beauty, are not changed because we have moved from a small house to a large one. *Cœlum non animum mutant.* Nor is there anything parochial in the conception of God as Father as we find it in the teaching of Jesus. He came to a people who had for generations tried to believe that Nature was responsive to each man's mood, that the

favoured of God were rewarded here and now with material prosperity and that disease or disaster were the proofs of the Divine displeasure at particular transgression; to a people who, having failed to reconcile this belief with the facts of innocent suffering, had lapsed into a pessimism which regarded the vast mass of mankind as mere fuel of fire, amid which the righteous must walk with fear and circumspection and from which if he persevered he might hope to be delivered in accordance with the decrees of a Lawgiver as just as He was awful. Jesus refused to sanction either the superstition which regarded the Creator as partial and capricious, or the fatalism which would make destiny or the law the ruthless and mechanical master of mankind. In illustrating His teaching of the universality of love by the character of the Father who sends His rain upon the just and unjust and is kind to the unthankful and evil, and in assuring the paralytic that despite his affliction God was neither remote nor unforgiving, He transcended the whole thought of His time. He shares the sense of the grandeur of creation and of the awfulness of the Creator which had been characteristic of the Psalmist and the great prophets of His own people, but He enriches it by revealing that in and through it, if men have eyes to see and ears to hear, the Father is making Himself known, the Father who so clothes the grass of the field and without whom no sparrow falls. It is love that generates and suffering love that regenerates the world—that is the message of His teaching and example. Our experience of love, commonly limited to one or two close personal relationships,

may make it more difficult for our imagination to conceive of God in these terms now that we have abandoned a geocentric conception of the universe. But the science which has enlarged our knowledge of the vastness of time and space has also enlarged our knowledge of the infinitely minute, so that, while it gives a new content to the immensity by which the Creator transcends His creatures, it also gives a new witness to the infinity of His knowledge and power in caring for them.

2. *He accepts the order of Nature and gives it a meaning.*—As regards the non-moral quality of inanimate nature, we have already noted that Jesus Himself recognised its impartiality and rejected the idea of "special judgments." The idea so familiar to the poets and so flattering to our egoism, that Nature meets our every mood and adapts sunshine and storm, heat and cold, to reward individual merits or punish individual errors is not His: the perfection of the Father's love is shown just because it is not so, because good and evil alike are set under the same natural conditions and live their lives under the same circumstances. He saw that if men were to develop it must be under an ordered regime, and accepted the world as calculated to train as well by its seeming ruthlessness as by its generosity the energies and intelligence of mankind. Jesus accepted it, and in fact we can do no other. For though we may be appalled at the consequences of ignorance or tempted to rebellion by the shock of calamity, we cannot conceive a universe in which things were different; if we cannot imagine a worse, at least we cannot imagine a better. A fixed

sequence of cause and effect, a reign of law, would seem to be the condition necessary for the evolution and training of character. The alternatives would be the chaos of Bedlam or the cruel comfort of the padded cell. Discipline, the discipline of Nature, is essential to growth.

The order of the household of God cannot be flexible to caprice; and an important part of our discipline, of service and a right relation to our brethren, is to accept it. Yet it is uniform not because of mechanical necessity, but for the good of His children. The wish to have it all good for the good children and all trouble for the bad arises from a wrong view of God's purpose, as though He were a mere lawgiver and not a Father. The spring of the teaching of Jesus regarding God as Father is His denial of this equivalence of service and reward. The world is ordered, and it must ever be a disaster to transgress its order; but His perfection is to be kind to the unthankful and evil and to manifest Himself in Him who seeks and saves the lost; and our perfection is not to be angry because our field is not better watered than the field of the wicked, but to forgive those who despitefully use us and to be at one with our Father in working for the salvation of His erring and rebellious children. Then all is ours.

3. *He reveals the method and purpose of the rule of God.*—For although Jesus rejected the sympathetic fallacy which makes the physical world the partner of our personal moods, He does not on that account treat Nature as meaningless. Only her meaning is drawn not so much from us as from God. If we

have eyes to see she is not opaque but transparent; if we have ears to hear she is not dumb but vocal. Over and over again Jesus took some aspect or incident of the physical sphere, and flung it before His followers with the assurance that in it was manifest the quality of God's Kingdom. Indeed it is very notable that in His training of them one main object is to develop their faculties for the apprehension of the inward and spiritual through the medium of the outward and visible, and that only when they have learnt to recognise the method of the Kingdom in the mustard seed and the leaven does He show to them its inmost nature incarnate in its supreme sacrament, Himself. The world in all its manifold aspects is God's parable. The invisible attributes of God, His eternal power and divinity, become intelligible in the things that He has made; and if our devotion is to escape anthropomorphism and sensuousness we must understand these. Then we are privileged to learn that the Creator is also the Father, that His character is revealed most fully for us not in the physical but in the personal, that He is most truly seen not as force but as love, and that awe and godly fear, necessary as they are if our love for Him is to be kept pure and heavenly, are yet not the highest characteristics of our worship, the truest expressions of our Sonship.

Here again the teaching of Jesus is in strong contrast to that of the bulk of His contemporaries. Greek thought, dominated from the first by the antitheses of the one and the many, the mind and the senses, the real and the phenomenal, had rejected

Plato's attempt to bridge the gulf and establish a sort of sacramentalism by the theory of Ideas, and had relapsed into more or less definite dualism. Those who were not content with such a position sought refuge either in the materialism of the Stoics and Epicureans or in the supernaturalism of the mystery religions. Even in Judaism the faith which had proclaimed that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork had grown dim.

We shall refer to this matter at greater length hereafter: meanwhile we would merely note that in the last century, and even at the present day, similar tendencies can be readily traced, and that the general collapse of materialism and of crude supernaturalism is being accompanied by an evident return by thinkers of widely different schools to the sacramentalism of Jesus, a sacramentalism which for the English-speaking peoples the poetry of Wordsworth and Browning has made familiar outside the boundaries of the Church.

4. *He teaches the right use of earth's blessings.*—Yet though Jesus never held out to His followers the belief that their material environment would be altered for their convenience, He refused to regard Nature as impervious to God or un-modifiable by Him. Indeed His attitude here as elsewhere is in striking contrast with the bulk of contemporary opinion. The Græco-Roman world under the influence of a diffused and vulgarised Platonism generally regarded the body as the prison-house of the soul, and material existence as a sphere from which the mind must emancipate itself if it was to attain the knowledge

of reality. In the East dualism was still more pronounced: matter if not actually identified with evil was under the domination of Satan, and virtue consisted in a rigid asceticism. This tendency to identify spirituality with abstention and deliverance from the physical was represented in Judaism by the communities of Essenes, and is perhaps traceable in the teaching of John Baptist: at certain epochs it has reappeared among Christians, and even to-day the belief that asceticism is an end in itself is a characteristic prejudice all the more powerful because seldom recognised or defended. Jesus, though He emphasises the value and timeliness of the Baptist's work, yet definitely repudiated for Himself and for the children of the Kingdom this pessimistic view of the natural world and the morality based upon it. Alike in teaching and life He maintained that Nature's gifts were of God, serving man's needs and development and to be used with joy and thankfulness. If He called upon the rich young ruler to give up the wealth which was stunting his spiritual growth, and is constant in His warnings that material considerations are always and everywhere secondary and must never be made an end in themselves, He as plainly shows that in the physical world there is nothing necessarily evil or apart from its misuse to be avoided. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, just because He was so sure that the life was more than meat: He was able to use Nature freely to supply material for His teaching and to promote the purpose of His ministry, just because He is always Lord of things and not their slave. Food and clothing, beauty and enjoy-

ment, sex and social intercourse, these things are in no case wrong in themselves: their right use is determined when it is controlled by the passion for God and for the service of His Kingdom. In that service it may or may not be requisite to surrender all earthly ties and abstain from all normal gratifications. But this is a matter not of law or system, but of spiritual well-being and vocation; for the sake of God and of the Kingdom, home and possessions, parents and friends, hands and feet and eyes, even physical life itself, must be held cheap and if necessary sacrificed; but such sacrifice has no merit in itself and is to be undertaken only under the compelling demand of love. It is not for us to judge others: to their own Master they stand or fall; but to the wisdom of God and to the society of disciples inspired by it the vindication or condemnation of their conduct will be made plain.

5. *He gives us victory over earth's evils.*—That the physical has its place alongside the spiritual in the service which men are called to render to God and to their brethren, is further proved by the attitude of Jesus towards disease. He saw that here was evil, something which hampered the full development of mankind and was out of harmony with the fulfilment in them of the Divine purpose. He came that we might have life and have it abundantly: and fullness of life means the co-operation of the whole personality, body, soul and spirit, with the Divine will. Jesus never suggests that sickness in any form is good or inevitable: thus while He warns His followers that so long as evil exists they will be called to meet afflictions and persecution,

the healing of the sick and the removal of physical suffering are an integral part of His attitude towards Nature. The morbid taint which has often crept into Christianity is as far from the Master's mind as is the extravagance which makes self-discipline an end in itself or the pietism which sees the world as a vale of tears. Regarding Nature thus as at once the scene on which man works out God's purpose and the means whereby spiritual values are achieved, Jesus gives to the natural order an abiding value, a value drawn not from itself, but from the ends for which it has been created, a value determined by the use which is made of it.

6. *He shows us the spiritual purpose for which all works together for good.*—It is evident from the records of Jesus as it is to a lesser degree from the experience of humanity, that when Nature is thus seen against a background of eternity the faculties for its understanding and use are vastly enhanced and quickened. Most of us can testify that to those who are facing death the world becomes infinitely more precious in proportion as it becomes less absorbing. The poppies in a Flanders trench, the larks singing amongst the guns, the swallows nesting in the wreckage—these things gain a beauty never before recognised; we are detached from easy acceptance of our normal environment, and can see it with a new wonder and a new reverence. Whoso loses his life finds it—not only by attaining a glimpse of heaven, but by a fresh and startling appreciation of earth. To ride loose to this life is to see it with the glory of Eden upon it, to see it despite its thistles and briars as the garden of the Lord, and to know

that in itself and apart from its misuse it is all very good. That is the secret of romance, of the gaiety and courage and sanity, of the love and joy and peace which are the portion of the children of the Kingdom.

And the physical world, if sacramental, is to Jesus neither mechanical nor impervious to the influence of the spirit. Ordered law reigns and is revealed in it; but such law has its source in the Divine will, and God is no exile nor alien in His creation. The old contention that He who made the laws is also at liberty to break them states the position inadequately. The spiritual sphere and energies to which many would give the name supernatural are as real and as orderly as the physical, though at present we have no complete or consistent knowledge of the conditions which apply to them. And in the teaching of Jesus as in the experience of the Church it is clear that the two spheres are not mutually exclusive, but that the spiritual interpenetrates and influences the physical. That is at least the plain conviction of the New Testament writers. It is difficult if not impossible to separate the so-called "nature miracles" from the rest of the Gospels. Nor, despite the protests of certain scientists and critics, does there seem to be any finally conclusive reason for admitting the effect of spiritual and psychic power upon living organisms and denying it upon the inanimate. It is at any rate worth noting that those who now maintain that the stilling of the storm is inconceivable, or that prayers for rain are superstitious, would twenty years ago have maintained as eagerly that the healing of the demoniac was a legend and that the

anointing of the sick was a survival of white magic. In the present state of psychic science it is eminently unwise to assert that we can put limits to the extent to which the non-material can control matter. That the changes of recent years have gone far to vindicate the validity of the records of Jesus and to alter the attitude of scientists to what is commonly called the miraculous can hardly be questioned. And that He expected a vast extension of such power and was constantly amazed at the absence of it in His followers is clear enough. That matter for all its appearance of fixity and obduracy is in reality plastic to the influence of God's Spirit acting through the prayers of the faithful is a belief warranted by Christian experience and not incongruous with our present knowledge. At least the evidence is sufficient to make the proof of the negative view impossible. As we learn the conditions governing phenomena (a subject of great but not paramount value for the religious development of mankind), and as we recognise the purpose for which the world was constituted, we shall discover more and more fully the potentialities of our home, and realise that in it indeed all things work togther for good to them that love God.

(C) An Interpretation of the Facts

From this brief examination of the outlook of Jesus we are led to attempt a statement of our present conception of the world in which we live and of the process of its development, of its relation to the eternal and of the character and purpose of

its Creator. Such an attempt to bring the witness of Christ to the interpretation of the facts and theories of modern science must needs be hypothetical and tentative, for among scientists there is neither any general agreement nor any claim to finality. If we seem presumptuous, we would merely repeat our conviction that those who accept Christianity have the right and duty to examine fresh knowledge in the light of what they themselves know of God, and to maintain that except by so doing they can give little meaning to their claim that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, the Life. When so many are perplexed and restrained from attempting to work for a Christian social order by the fear that Christianity is irreconcilable with modern knowledge, and is at once obscurantist and out of date, such an interpretation is of primary importance for our work.

The working hypothesis of the Christian student is his conviction that the world-process is not purposeless, that its object is the creation and development of free personalities capable of apprehending and reproducing in their characters the eternal values of goodness, truth and beauty, personalities individual and social, finding their own full development as members one of another, and that their relationship to God is best described under the analogy of the Father and his family.

Two rival theories have to be examined at the outset— determinism and the dualism which may or may not be combined with it.

The former has taken very varying forms at different times, these having in common the belief that

the universe is the product of an inexorable and mechanical process. In recent Western thought this has until late years commonly taken the form of pure materialism. By it the attempt has been made to interpret all things in terms of chemistry and physics. Its supporters claim that creation originates in the interactions of material bodies upon one another, in blind purposeless obedience to the character of their chemical constitution and to the conditions discoverable by physical science; that life has arisen as a by-product of these interactions; that the mental, moral and spiritual qualities of mankind are due to the reaction upon its environment of the elements of his organism; that emotion, thought and volition have their origin in the chemical changes in the brain and nerve cells; and that man is an automaton. This conclusion is itself a *reductio ad absurdum:* whatever we are, we are not automata. In view of the devastating criticism to which the discoveries of the last twenty years have exposed this belief, and to the fact that it has fallen from influence with a speed unparalleled in the history of philosophy, it is not necessary to restate the evidence on which it has been rejected. Christians, recognising to the full the significance of the material world, rightly refuse to interpret the higher in terms of the lower, or to parley with a theory which is as false to the facts as it is to their convictions.

Determinism has lately reappeared in another form. As the result of the investigations of psychologists into the instincts which are the motive power in humanity, and of biologists into cell-formation

and the transmission of life, schools have arisen which, while not necessarily accepting materialism, regard human conduct as inevitably determined, as the mere unfolding and operation of forces inherent in the germ-cells and fixing the whole character of the individual. We may not yet be able to analyse all the factors in the complex or to foretell exactly what their reaction to any given circumstances will be; if we could exactly estimate them we should be able to see every activity of the organism as determinable with mathematical certainty, as in the last resort purely reflex; and if so, human freedom becomes an illusion, and human effort loses its incentive. It is not enough to reply that even if we are neither free nor responsible, we must continue to act as if we were so; and that, at least until we know all the elements which condition our actions, we are justified in so doing. Rather we must ask whether the evidence supplied by the study of the development of living organisms and of the phenomena of man's behaviour can be satisfactorily and completely explained on such a basis. And so long as it is evident that the determinism of Weismannists and Freudians is rejected by a mass of equally competent opinion it cannot be accepted as conclusive. It is not our business here to state at length the grounds of its insufficiency; it is sufficient to refer for the fuller treatment of psychological problems to the next chapter, and for biology to the researches of Dr. Haldane and Professor Thomson.

In regard to dualism the issue is less simple; for it is evident that at certain periods it has in a modified

form been accepted by Christians, and the members of the Commission are not in complete agreement about it. We would all reject it in the crude shape which identifies matter with evil, or regards the physical world as the "prison-house of spirit." But the evidence for the existence of a single and personal power of evil is too strong alike in tradition and experience to be lightly dismissed. None of us would wish to minimise the fact of sin, or to reject the view that the world is the scene of a constant struggle between right and wrong, or to limit the forces of evil or our individual misuses of choice, or to deny that Jesus and His followers personalised this force under the name of Satan. But some of us would go on to maintain that evil has no substantial existence, that it arose solely in the development of free personalities, and that to admit the belief in a personal devil as the supra-mundane rival and opposite to God is at once unsubstantiated by the facts and unnecessary to Christian thought.

To the student of Christian history it is obvious that the dualism which regards the material world as itself evil, the conviction underlying the Gnostic heresies and the Manichæan religion, powerfully strengthened the ascetic movement within the Church; especially in regard to matters of sex and diet, the right to possessions and the use of physical force. It still survives in the form of prejudices and conventions which regard certain physical actions as wrong in themselves; and social thinkers have to be constantly on their guard against them.

Similarly, the view which sees evil as an illusion, accepted as it is by the followers of Mrs. Eddy, does not seem reconcilable with the facts or necessitated by the belief that God is the sole ultimate reality and that in Him all things consist. Rather such a view leads inevitably to scepticism, by denying the validity of all sense-perception and of the intellectual processes which are conditioned by a time-space environment, or to the setting up of arbitrary and rationally indefensible authorities. Here again mistakes of principle will be found to cause mistakes or inconsistencies in social thinking.

As regards the less extreme form of dualism, instead of examining once more the problem of evil, we propose to set out in summary outline our conception of the nature of the universe and of the development of life.

As already stated, there seems nothing irreconcilable with Christianity in the results of astronomical and geological research. Its conclusions as regards the origin and formation of the solar system, and the age and history of the world, do not increase the difficulty of maintaining the existence of the eternal values or their manifestation in terms of space and time. Rather, convinced as we are that the cosmos is explicable only if it serves a purpose, we would urge that it is only in a belief in the reality of such values that this purpose can be found; that the world exists for an object outside itself, an object whose fullness exceeds our grasp, but which we can discern here and now as in a glass darkly. That object we should be content to define as the creation and development of free personalities

capable of glorifying God and enjoying Him for ever.

It is, we believe, a profitless task to join issue with all the criticisms that can be raised. Such questions as " Why did not God, if He willed to create, do so by a mere fiat ? " were taken very seriously by the Christians of the early centuries ; and their efforts to answer are ingenious if not always convincing. Suffice it to admit that we do not know precisely why the method of long and laborious growth accompanied by struggle and suffering, sin and failure, and ending too often in what looks like defeat, was necessary. But we can make some observations about it. Love is in its very nature creative ; from it in some form or other spring all the graces and arts, the discoveries and achievements, of man ; from it in its higher aspect springs the expansion of the circle of fellowship ; the love of one leads on to the love of two, and the love of two to the love of many, as Plato and Emerson have taught. Love to be fully worthy of the name can only exist between persons who are freely united one with another ; neither we nor God can love machines, puppets, things without a life and will of their own. Such freedom can only be gained by long development, since it implies individuation, self-consciousness, self-mastery and self-surrender. And this development is what we appear to trace in the story of evolution. If there was to be progress of any kind there must be ordered conditions and a fixed environment ; just as we could not play a game if the court were always changing its shape and the rules were arbitrarily altered at every stroke,

so if Nature were not obdurate and law-abiding, the whole effort after adaptation to environment, that is after life itself, would be impossible. It was a Greek Christian of the third century who remarked that if the climate had been uniformly tempered man would never have developed his skill in tailoring and building or his knowledge of the uses of fire, that if there had been no limit to the food supply there would have been no agriculture, no hunting or fishing, no hardihood nor training of body or brain. And his words are as true of lower organisms as of ourselves. Gradually under the pressure of struggle we see the simple becoming complex, the shapeless blob of jelly developing into the creature with differentiated organs and the glimmering of a conscious life. Consciousness develops into individuality and a power of choice appears. In the birds and higher animals there emerge traces of self-consciousness, of intelligent in contrast with instinctive action and of the stirrings of a moral sense. And if we are asked why development depends upon struggle and is accompanied by failure and cruelty and what we can hardly not call sin, we can only urge that progress cannot be and is not a mechanical process, that it cannot be and is not merely the onward surge of a life-force, but that it depends at every step upon the efforts of the unit, upon his response to environment, upon his choice, upon his adventuring, upon his endurance and growth; and that if the unit is free to expand it must also be free to contract, if it can within however narrow limits choose its path, it can also follow a blind alley, or beat a retreat, that the possibility of

evil is the price paid for goodness. And further, if evolution seems characterised by a hideous toll of innocent suffering and by a sacrifice and wastage out of all proportion to the results reached, we may at least suggest that innocent suffering is not unfamiliar to Christians and that the principle of life through death is fundamental to their outlook—these two being in fact the central lesson of the Cross. It was the greatest of French naturalists and perhaps of all observers, Fabre, the Homer of the insects, who, while he has disclosed to us horrors ghoulish and grim beyond imagination, has also put on record the question which haunted him—" If each creature is what it is only because it is a necessary part of the plan of the supreme Artisan who has constructed the universe, why have some the right of life and death and others the terrible duty of immolation? Do not both obey, not the gloomy law of carnage, but a kind of sovereign and exquisite sacrifice, some sort of unconscious idea of submission to a superior and collective interest? "

As we watch and study the stages by which life has expanded and see how, despite many set-backs and much side-tracking, the movement has always been towards the appearance of organisms more elaborate in structure, and more capable of conscious personal existence, we can at least feel that if this result was only attainable under the conditions that we know, the struggle and suffering and the apparent mistakes and failures have not been in vain. Our humanity cannot be a worthless thing if it has cost so much to bring it into being. *Tantæ molis erat divinam condere gentem.* The travail and groaning

of creation will be seen to be due to and justified by its end, the appearing of the family of God.

Yet in view of the facts, the survival of primitive and monstrous elements in the animal world, the failure and retrogression and disappearance of myriad types, are we not driven to accept the hypothesis recently popularised by certain pseudo-scientific followers of Professor Bergson, and to regard the whole process as the work of an experimenter in creation, of a finite and struggling deity whose inchoate designs produced at first a series of crude and horrible essays, the rough drafts from which finer workmanship could be developed?

We do not for a moment deny the elements of experiment, of failure, of monstrosity, of what St. Paul calls frustration, lack of success or "vanity." But if the goal is the creation of free volition, the possibility of free development must be inherent from the first in the creative process. It is life, the living organism, which advances or retreats, which in response to its environment develops new faculties and new forms. And life, even if we give it the illegitimate title of the Life-force, is not identical with God, though it derives from and is sustained by Him. In the lower as in the higher stages of evolution creative love is consistent in method, leaving its creatures free to develop their individualities without constraint save that of inspiring them to the best. If in the process mistakes are made and suffering, innocent suffering, is involved, this is as evident in man as in his dim and primitive ancestors. If the Cross illuminates it in the one case, it will do so in the other. A false step is taken, an unconscious

perversion is encouraged, the course of evolution is driven into a blind alley, and untold multitudes of living beings are doomed to sacrifice, until at last the type perishes or a break-out in a new direction is achieved. And if life is not to be reduced to the level of the automatic and mechanical, that is, if the nature and purpose of creative love is to be unchanged, the results of evil cannot be annulled by intervention from without: here, as always, suffering and penitence and re-birth mark the path of salvation.

If God is love, such a process is necessary for the production of free and responsive objects for His love. Nor in that case does the old antithesis, "Love or Power," force itself upon us. It is true that if we limit our outlook to inanimate nature, to the non-moral environment, the message of creation might speak only of power and divinity; but if we regard the physical world as the gymnasium of life and study the results of its training in its highest product known to us, humanity, we begin to see a congruity and consistency about the whole and to confirm our faith in love.

Power, itself non-moral, could create a machine whose reactions were involuntary and automatic; Love, in order that it may find an object capable of relationship with itself, defines and directs power and creates free life. Power as the mere ability to act, power in the sense often given to omnipotence, cannot be the ultimate attribute of God: or God might well be the devil. And the end is not yet. While it does not appear yet what we shall be, there can be no reason to doubt that a similar training

is even now in process and that individuals will be developed by it immeasurably surpassing all that we know. Progress is neither automatic nor constant; but as by the effort and agony of myriads life has been lifted on to new levels of possibility and achievement, so its highest manifestation by the same effort and agony will produce beings capable of attaining heights now inconceivable. It is the business of Christians to fix their eyes rather upon the future than upon the past; and the record of what has been, instead of constantly discouraging them by the memory of their lowly origin and animal instincts, will inspire them to continue the effort and rejoice in the agony. Throughout the whole world-story runs the recurring *motif*, "the best is yet to be."

CHAPTER III

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For the social student some sketch of the universe, God's nursery for His human children, is an essential preliminary. But man, the highest product that we know of the evolutionary process, is a denizen of two worlds, and if we are to understand and move towards a realisation of his spiritual vocation we must first consider the conditions, the limitations and opportunities of his earthly environment. For it is scarcely necessary to insist that our whole outlook upon the problems of social and industrial and political life will be affected by what we conceive to be the character and purpose of physical nature and of the God revealed in it. So far as mankind is rational, its philosophy of the universe will have a powerful influence not only upon its hope and ambitions, but upon its individual and collective conduct. To see the world as a vale of tears is naturally to transfer one's dreamland from it to Paradise. To regard it as evil is to advocate a rigid asceticism, or perhaps an unbridled licentiousness; to find in it nothing but the operation of an inexorable machine, is to lose the incentive to effort and to resign oneself to despair. Only if we find the Gospel of Christ consistent with and corroborated by the facts of life as we have come to learn them,

can we insist upon His claim to our loyalty and enter the service of His Kingdom with joyful hope. For the other-worldliness which despairs of improvement in this life, and would postpone all expectations until a miraculous millennium, is hardly less alien to His Spirit than the materialism which would reduce Christianity to the level of bare ethics and classify its Founder as a Jewish social reformer.

Yet to approach the Christian conception of man primarily from the side of his material surroundings and animal ancestry would be dangerously misleading. It has often and truly been noted that the concentration during the past century upon the physical sciences and the exploitation of natural resources has exceeded and distracted attention from the higher studies which can alone guide us to a right use of new knowledge and power. The bewilderment and chaos of our time is due not least to its failure to produce saints and thinkers who will keep pace in their own sphere with the chemists and physicists, the biologists and psychologists, and restore to mankind a fresh assurance of the eternal values and a truer sense of proportion. We do not wish to disparage the greatness of the debt which humanity owes to the heroic and disinterested labours of a century of natural scientists. They have revolutionised man's conception of his home, and opened up before him opportunities incalculable in their present value and still more so in their promise for the future. It is not too much to say that if the mass of men and women can to-day, as never before, appreciate and accept Christ's ideal of the Kingdom with its hope of human health and happiness, of the

control of Nature and the universal brotherhood of mankind, it is to their efforts that we owe it. Nor are they to blame if theologians and prophets, artists and poets, statesmen and philosophers have failed to prevent an exaggerated emphasis being laid upon the sufficiency of material development; or if the people in the first flush of new ideas and new discoveries have let their gaze wander from the vision of spiritual truth and beauty and righteousness.

Here we would simply utter a warning against approaching the consideration of man's nature and social life too exclusively from the standpoint of his past. Darwin and his successors, in establishing, by whatever precise theory, our physical kinship with the anthropoids and the animal kingdom, have directed attention to those elements in our nature which human thought has hitherto refused to recognise as its truest characteristics. *Homo sapiens*, or, as in an age of machinery philosophers may prefer to call him, *Homo faber*, is physically and still more spiritually no mere glorified ape. And the analysis of the primitive instincts of his inheritance, valuable as it is for the right estimate of motive, can no more give a true or complete picture of the human soul than a handful of carbonates and proteids and a gallon or two of water can represent the human body. It is important to know the raw material of life—it is even more important not to forget that before it assumes shape as the stuff of which saints and children of God consist, it is profoundly transformed, and that for those who would advance the well-being of their fellows it is the process of transformation that matters. It is inevitable that

students of psychology and medicine should have their attention focussed chiefly upon the phenomena of abnormality, degeneracy and disease. Few of them succeed in escaping a certain preoccupation with the morbid. And in estimating the importance of much modern psychology we shall do well to remember that its results are based upon fuller acquaintance with the pathological than with the normal. The tendency of to-day to estimate mankind by the standpoint of the primitive, the perverted and the decadent rather than by the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ, is as antisocial as it is unjust. We have a right to be judged by our best, not our worst, by our future rather than our past. Mankind is never unwilling to accept excuses for his moral failings; and when psychologists have their theories popularised and distorted by a press which panders to the taste for morbidity, we would protest in the interests of sanity and of moral progress that the resulting conception of man's nature and destiny is neither worthy nor true to the facts.

(A) The Revelation of God

1. *Progressive and conditioned by man's response.*— If man has emerged as the product of a long series of lower organisms and carries with him abundant proofs of his earthly origin, it is in his appreciation of the spiritual values of beauty, truth and goodness, in his communion with God, and in the influence of this communion upon his whole emotional, intellectual and volitional life that he shows the real

character and possibilities of his nature. The words of Genesis, "Let us make man in our image," represent the conviction upon which all religion and in the end all sound thinking are based. For they involve the belief, which common sense strenuously maintains as against the sceptic, that what man at his best recognises as æsthetically, intellectually and morally desirable is no mere delusion or caprice; and humanity has recognised that the highest element in its nature, the spirit or mind, the self-conscious and God-conscious personality, separates man from the brutes and is not dependent upon nor confinable within the physical sphere. "Two worlds are ours" is a belief almost universal to mankind. The antitheses, natural and supernatural, physical and spiritual, earthly and heavenly, though the implied contrast is easily exaggerated and the distinction may no longer be regarded as rigid, are familiar from our childhood. The experience of the vast majority of articulate human beings testifies surely if dimly to the reality of the unseen and of man's place in it. As far back as human history can be traced, we can see glimmerings of this experience, and in the infinite variety of folk-lore and legend, of cult and creed, the effort to fix and explain and intensify it. And as the powers of imagination and thought and expression expand, their growth is nowhere more plainly seen than in their concept of the divine. The ancient sneer which would parody the words of Genesis and represent man as making gods after his own likeness has this much truth in it, that from age to age we can trace along with the development of new faculties in human nature an

evolution in man's idea of the Divine. If on the one side this process can be described, as it was by Justin and Clement, as a progressive self-revelation of the Logos, the guide and educator of His human children, it is equally true to recognise that the measure of this revelation is constantly conditioned by man's ability to receive it. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," is a necessary corollary to the belief that God is Love, and that as such, though ever giving Himself to His creatures, He cannot, without robbing them of their freedom and being false to His own nature, force them to accept His gifts. Nowhere is this development in the knowledge of spiritual values more clearly traceable than in the pages of the Old Testament which unfold before us the stages by which a people uniquely endowed with religious consciousness strove to trace and explain and justify the dealings of God with them, and in doing so expanded their conception of His nature and purpose, and prepared the way for Christ. As we study the sacred writings we can trace how mankind received the revelation of God, and how prophets and sages were inspired to express it in terms intelligible to their own time and invaluable still. And if we admit a development in its fullness and maintain that its authority for us is secondary to and must be tested by that of Christ, we shall not thereby destroy the value of such a record or fail to draw warnings and examples from it, because we are disciples of Him who came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them, because we believe that God who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke unto the fathers

has spoken to us pre-eminently and uniquely in His Son. Rather it is in the history of the saints ancient and modern, the Christians before and after Christ, that we can best understand the operations of the Divine Spirit in preparing and moulding men of differing times and temperaments into a measure of conformity with Him in whom previous ages reach their climax and from whom a new epoch draws its abiding inspirations. It is in the light of such men's lives rather than of our sub-human heritage that seekers for social righteousness will estimate the difficulties and face the problems of their task.

As we trace in history the emergence of the supernatural within the natural, the growth from the animal to the spiritual, we are constantly reminded of the process revealed to us by the studies of geologists and biologists. The analogy between the macrocosm and the microcosm, between the universe and the individual, which commended itself to Plato and fascinated the Stoics, must not be pressed too far; but the parallelism is at least congruous with the belief that both are the outcome of a single mind, the unfolding of a consistent purpose. Man emerging at last with his powers of self-consciousness and reflection sets to work to master the environment in which he finds himself and to make it minister to his needs. At first these are simple, and concerned mainly with the gratifying of his appetites; but from the first there is evidence of a reaching out beyond the animal instincts, of the desire for creative art, the impulse to ask questions and to speculate, the working of the moral sense. If the

raw material of his nature can be readily classified into various simple instincts, it is plain that the sublimation of the primitive begins from the first, and that as the family expands into the clan and the clan into the tribe, the influence of life in a community and the dim consciousness of the supernatural begin to exert restraint and to produce higher and more complex psychic states. The original instincts become profoundly modified in adapting themselves to the new conditions, and religion, however crude its form, becomes a formative force of the first importance. If then, as later, the fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom, if such fear expressed itself in strange and often horrible cults, at least we can recognise in the taboos and ritual of primitive man the earliest stages of his progress towards the knowledge of God, the first groping of spiritual infancy towards its parent. The recrudescence of animal instincts and the perversion of higher impulses make the story terrible to the humanitarianism of to-day; our own age with its atavisms and cruelties will perhaps seem hardly less terrible a thousand years hence; for in spite of relapses there is advance, slow, painfully slow, stretching over ages of which hardly a vestige remains, but preparing the way for a time when a more rapid development can take place. Those who are depressed by the evidence of spiritual insensibility and ingrained selfishness in themselves and the modern world may well consider the length of time since mankind first appeared on the earth, and contrast that vast period of our babyhood with the few thousand years whose history we know, that

primitive humanity with the saints and sages whose names are household words.

And at every stage in his development the task before man is the same. He is a citizen alike of earth and of heaven, conscious of the demands upon him of his spiritual life, responding however slightly to the appeal of goodness, truth and beauty, and driven to express his sense of the supernatural and to bring his physical life into a growing harmony with the dictates of his higher self. By his power of rational thought and constructive ability he can create instruments for the subjugation of his environment—instruments which range from the plough and the loom, the house and the boat to the systems of law and social convention. Man the craftsman, unlike his animal ancestors, does not merely adapt himself to Nature; he sets out to understand and exploit her powers, observing and interpreting, moulding and controlling an ever-widening range of his surroundings. And through the whole course of civilisation his underlying purpose is to overcome the disharmonies between his body with its animal instincts and his spirit with its supernatural yearnings. He is the victim of a continual restlessness unless he can satisfy himself that his earthly life is in some way serving an end beyond itself, is in some sort of conformity with his ideals and with the ultimate purpose. He is haunted by glimpses of spiritual values, of the heaven which is his home, and driven by the promptings of conscience and the lash of remorse to make his earthly life consistent with his concept of God. In so doing he is thwarted first by the obscurity and uncertainty of his spiritual vision,

since God can only reveal what he is able to apprehend and understand; secondly, by the difficulty of expressing what he sees under the conditions of material life and the physical limitations of his own body, the domination of unsublimated instincts, the pressure of social conditions, the strength of self-centred motives in himself and others. He is constrained to make concessions to his lower nature, to choose the second best, to debase his dreams so as to bring them within his grasp, to set up and serve gods whose character is almost a caricature of his own. But despite it all, the same urge pursues him, and if the mass of humanity acquiesces in a low standard and seems to abandon the effort without regret, there have always been those in whom the thirst for God would neither be quenched nor denied, prophets and reformers afflicted with a divine discontent and striving by warning and precept and example to arouse a like discontent in their fellows.

The work of such men is always the same. In some form or another they have seen God, and the sight has awakened in them a passion of revolt against the ugliness and lies and corruption of earthly life. They feel the vast possibilities open to mankind and contrast them with his present servitude and limitations. They dream of a time when he shall be free to live eternally, when his body shall perfectly obey and express the yearnings of his spirit, when his individuality shall find its liberty in a fellowship of kindred spirits, when the ordered human society shall perfectly reproduce the pattern seen on the mount of vision, when the natural shall be the sacrament of the supernatural.

For despite the tendency to relapse into other-worldliness, the desire to bring the two into harmony and the belief that the ideal can be actualised have never, at least in the West, been long disputed. We have seen grounds for believing that the order of Nature is sacramental through and through, that God reveals Himself to us through the medium of the objects of sense and under conditions of space and time. The same principle is manifest in mankind, and for those who accept the Christian faith in the Incarnation becomes in some form inevitable.

2. *Given through the medium* (1) *of the material.*— Mankind with its animal instincts and material environment is constantly tempted to live solely in the physical. The senses crave satisfaction and are imperious in their demands. That the spirit struggles against the flesh is an experience common to us all; and we all know the ease and peril of capitulation. Indeed for most men there is need of rigid discipline and of times of deliberate withdrawal from the appeal of the material world lest they become wholly earthbound. We can only see our bodily life rightly if we keep it subordinate to the spiritual end which it subserves; and to do this implies the effort to resist the clamour of the senses and remain attentive to God.

Nevertheless the acceptance of Jesus Christ as God's fullest self-revelation brings the acknowledgment that He gives Himself most fully to us not as "pure Spirit to pure spirit," but through and in the material world-process of which we are a part. This view gives to all nature, and especially to physical life, as the medium of God's fullest and humblest

approach to us, immense sanctity and importance. It means that we must look upon all the data of sense as being also, potentially, the data of spirit; and that the true line of our physical, social and mental evolution must be towards making the world a more perfect vehicle of the Spirit of God. In considering man and man's communion with God from the social and corporate point of view, the belief that the visible world is the medium of God's self-revelation and self-giving to men assumes special importance. For on the one hand men are infinitely graded, in spiritual capacity as in all else; on the other hand, God's self-revelation in the world is graded too—a process culminating in the absolute self-giving of Jesus Christ. If, then, spirit thus everywhere pervades nature, giving to it all its beauty, significance and worth, this means that through the material world men can everywhere, so far as they are aware of God, find Him giving Himself under the accidents of sense. There is a fundamental cleavage between this conception of God's presence and self-revelation in the world (a conception which yet fully safeguards His unalterable distinctness and transcendence), and either the entirely non-sacramental view of His nature and action which sharply opposes spirit to sense, or the unbridled immanentism which lands us sooner or later in a pantheistic philosophy. A belief that the material world is susceptible of God consecrates material life, and makes of it, in so far as it is virtually or actually dedicated to the purposes of His eternal will, a real revelation of the Divine. There is for it no water-tight compartment between

nature and grace, though an invincible distinction between the two. Through the consecration of the natural the supernatural can everywhere reach us; since it is already and unalterably present.

These considerations give to the social aspect of Christian endeavour a more directly religious and not merely amiably humanitarian aspect. They suggest that the effort to give beauty and rightness to our human world may be our contribution to the full flowering of Divine Reality in space and time; and that whenever we create or permit the ugly, sordid and imperfect, we are directly profaning and impeding the self-expression of God. Carried to their logical conclusion, they would compel us to look upon every act of daily life as implicitly religious, and are fundamental to a really Christian view of man's every relationship. Such a conception of the universe of sense as awakening and feeding our need of spirit will give a fresh colour to our attitude towards the conservation of natural beauty, the creation of civic beauty, the status and vocation of the artist, the moral worth of perfect craftsmanship and honest industry, the exact and finished performance of the humblest deeds. All these can participate in God's purpose and become in their measure real means of grace. A Christian social order must be one in which such an ordering of daily life, and such a free expansion of beauty, is possible for all. For if the word " redemption " sums up our best conception of God's purpose for the world, its gradual approximation to the Divine idea, this must include (though it must never be equated with) the redemption by consecration of its material aspect; the

turning of the ordinary stuff of life on all levels into heavenly food. And this must involve a persistent effort to eliminate everything that conflicts with man's best vision of God; which means everything inconsistent with the Spirit of Christ. Here, as ever, we shall best serve our fellow-men by first serving God. Adoration is the real key to action. If our attitude towards the world of the senses be conditioned by a clear certitude of the omnipresence of an unchanging and perfect Love, then our dealings with that world will be characterised by a reverence which implicitly involves the Christianising of the material setting of life.

Some kind of sacramental doctrine is involved in a Christian view of God's nature and purpose and the workings of Grace, because only on this assumption can the nearness, simplicity and yet " otherness " of the supernatural come home to us.

(2) *Of the personal.*—If the Incarnation is consistent with and illuminates our belief that the material universe and our own physical nature are of abiding worth, since it is through them that God is revealed to us, it indicates also what the teaching of Jesus so fully confirms, that for us human beings the supreme relationship is not with the physical but with the personal, that for mankind the supreme sacrament is Man. In an age when men were inclined to seek in obedience to law the truest line of development, Jesus stood for the inadequacy of anything so mechanical and inanimate. His values are not abstractions like goodness and truth and beauty, though these have their place, but those of life, love and joy and peace. He takes the concept

of goodness, which might otherwise signify, as it has done so often, a cold and arid virtue, and fills it with glowing vitality by showing that its attainment consists not in the observance of precepts only, but in a right disposition towards God and our fellow-men, a disposition which alone enables those precepts to be fulfilled. The spiritual values depend ultimately upon spiritual relationships. Love, compact of sympathy and devotion, lifts life on to a plane far above the world of correct conduct or logical thought or faultless taste, though love in the Christian sense will contain and inspire all these. It is the glory of St. Paul that under the influence of his Master he could lay aside the legalism of his training and draw out from the teaching of Jesus His contrast between the way of fear and repression and obedience, and the way of liberty and sublimation and the response of faith to grace. Devotion to God in Christ and sympathy with all the body of the godly, these are for him the guiding principles of existence, those alone are the fulfilment of the law. Religion may easily be regarded primarily as a matter of emotion and of an ecstatic cultus, or of intellect and of doctrine and philosophy, or of volition and of the practice of right actions. To Christ and His followers it involves the whole personality, what matters is what we are, in all that we feel or think or do; beauty and truth and goodness are only attainable if we are ourselves beautiful and true and good, and we can only become so by communion with God in fellowship one with another.

Indeed it is through personal relationships, the contact of life with life, that we are most intimately

influenced for good or evil, and through persons that we most plainly receive the knowledge of God. In the great souls of the past whose experience lives in history, there is massive testimony to the development and reality of religion; the *consensus fidelium* carries with it an authority which none can lightly neglect or set aside. And in our own knowledge of our fellow-men, as we discover in multitudes of humble folk evidence of aspiration and effort and sacrifice and the working of a power not their own, our faith in God and our knowledge of His nature and purpose are abundantly confirmed. And as we set ourselves to serve Him in however small a way, as we strive to fulfil in fellowship our ideals of goodness and truth and beauty, we gain confidence and conviction.

Religion comes to men most commonly through their friendships; it is imparted by those to whom it is a living reality, those who reveal it not so much by what they say or do as by what they are. In the early years of home life, from parents and teachers, or at later stages from the touch of others who are themselves in communion with God, we catch, as it were, the infection of His presence. Conduct, the doing of His will, predisposes us to receive: argument and study remove obstacles and resolve doubts. But for most of us it is through persons whom we love, persons whose lives make contact with ours, that God comes most plainly and immediately. For sympathy, the intimate communion of person with person, is the strongest and most formative power in the whole range of human experience. All of us know the expansion

and enrichment and freedom which accompanies love, how every joy is doubled and every sorrow halved by being shared, and how insensibly the whole quality of our natures is permeated and changed by the influence of another. Impersonal objects, abstract qualities, causes and ideals, all these move and inspire us; but because we are ourselves personal, it is in the personal that we find our truest satisfaction, our closest relationships. Nature and the animate world mediates to us God in its own measure; it is through the sacrament of personality that we discover Him in such fullness as we can apprehend, that we know Him to be neither a force nor a value, but supremely a Person with whom, as with our earthly friends, we can enter into a relationship of love.

As what we shall call love is cardinal to our interpretation of Christianity, it will be well to define its significance to us. For almost no word in the whole range of religious ideas is more diversely interpreted; and the misunderstandings of it have done grave damage to mankind. In St. Paul and St. John its importance is clear enough; but later generations were perplexed about it; and to-day, even among trained theologians and psychologists the application and analysis of it differ widely. Christian love, in the sense in which we use the term in these pages, springs out of an act of faith, of recognition and trust. In it tender emotion and understanding, the energy of the feelings and of the mind, are combined to form sympathy or compassion. Its primary element is passion, the "raw red stuff of the heart" which can be so hideously misused,

but is none the less the driving force of life, the source of vitality and power. Passion is balanced and directed by reverence, the regard for the sanctity and moral worth of another's personality, which makes it impossible for us to use him as a means to our own ends or to seek less for him than his own highest good. As these are tested in active goodwill and self-giving they create the disposition of love, by which heart and mind and will are harmonised, when a single object attracts to itself our affection and interest and activity. "Love," says St. Augustine, "draws the soul, as the force of gravity draws the body." [1]

By love thus defined the self is unified and organised. Each element in our nature makes its contribution. A single loyalty dominates and directs and inspires the whole. Only so can the life of man find joy and peace and power. For the personality is not, as some psychologists would lead us to suppose, a mere bundle of separate instincts, nor can each instinct be adequately sublimated apart from the complete self. Instincts are not independent entities, but qualities of the living organism; and unless the personality, the synthesis and source of all its functions, responds to and is concentrated upon one all-satisfying object, no true sublimation, or, as we should call it, regeneration, can take place. To unite in this way all the forces of our being involves a measure, a large measure, of discipline. When once the ideal has been found, errant instincts can one by one be attached to it. But only as they

[1] *De Civ. Dei*, xi. 28.

are brought into union with the central interest of life will their transformation be accomplished. Our conviction is that God, above all as He is revealed in Christ, can alone be the object of a love which will absorb every fibre of our being. And the love thus aroused and fulfilled will colour with its own quality all lesser relationships.

(B) Man's Response

Involving—1. *Unification and freedom.*—Man, as we have seen, is always restless and unhappy unless he can find some unity and consistency in his life. In attempting it he is hampered by the disabilities produced by his animal instincts and physical needs. Appetites which he has not learnt to control, passions tyrannous in their power, the accumulated influence of hereditary and personal mistakes, added to the constraints of ill-health and of material circumstance, distract his course and dissipate his energies. He satisfies his desire for freedom by finding it in the gratification of his caprices, by doing whatever he happens at the moment to like. Then at times of retrospect or of exaltation he realises that throughout he has only been a slave, that he has failed to do more than satiate unregulated desires, strive after unworthy ambitions, and obey a multitude of incoherent impulses. Fancying himself the captain of his soul, he has kept to no straight nor continuous course, but has merely drifted in the current. To be master of circumstance, to concentrate all his powers of body, mind and spirit, to unify his nature, controlling and directing the

warring elements within it, and to be free to serve with every faculty of his being some purpose large enough to answer every craving and sublimate every instinct—that is his dream. Multitudes when they are confronted with the contrast between such a dream and the facts of earthly existence take refuge either in capitulation to the lower and in a scepticism which excuses them for so doing, or in a rejection of the physical world as a mere prison-house of the soul, in emancipating themselves as far as possible from bodily needs and passions and from contact with their environment. In the first case the higher self is drugged by pleasure and excitement, culture and intellectualism, business interests and a ceaseless round of activities : outlets differing according to the temperament absorb the vitality : the spiritual nature is deprived of nourishment and might seem to be dead, were it not unexpectedly revealed when loss or suffering or the presence of death breaks the power of the dominant interest and reveals the starved soul to consciousness. In a complex state of society, when all the resources of civilisation are employed to provide substitutes for God, it is hardly surprising that the " natural man " abounds, or that those who cannot find rest from such opiates despair of the world. The " apathy " of the Stoics, the determinism of Calvin, the non-resistance of Tolstoy witness to the protest of the spirit against a world seemingly impervious to its influence and a generation indifferent to its claims. And few Christians can escape perplexity when they see the mass of their fellows blind to the vision and deaf to the call which for themselves are so impera-

tive and so satisfying. Even Jesus, who more than any other knew what was in man, was amazed at the hardness of his heart!

In view of what we have said of the sacramental principle, it is obvious that Christians will accept neither the worldliness of the *homme moyen sensuel* nor the other-worldliness which is the reaction against it. Indeed neither extreme is in fact true to the highest experience of mankind. Unification of the different faculties of personality, by whatever method it may be achieved, is necessary for all normal human beings; and they all seek an object other than themselves in whose service they can attain it. Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, with its portrait of the prostitute who came to regard sexual intercourse as the supreme end of man in order to justify to herself the dedication of her whole life to it, is typical; for each of us if he is to find an inner harmony must relate his own particular career to some end larger than itself. In the vast majority of cases he sees it as in some sense a contribution, even a sacrifice, to the welfare of his family or his caste or his nation. By whatever devious paths, our self-protective instinct guides us to the conviction that our lives, however sordid or selfish, are actuated and ennobled by motives of altruism. The hunger for God takes strange and scarcely recognisable shapes: the normal man cannot escape it.

2. *The inspiration of an ideal.*—But if unity and freedom are sought in a vast variety of loyalties, how are we to examine their respective claims? Jesus left only one test, that of fruits; and His great follower in his definition of the fruits of the Spirit

and in the governing principle of his own actions expands and illustrates the saying of his Master. We may state it in two questions: Does such a life bring into full and harmonious and productive activity all the faculties which constitute personality? and, Does it promote in every sphere the highest welfare of humanity? or, as a Christian would phrase it, Does it reflect the character and give expression to the Spirit of Christ? and, Does it build up in love Christ's Body, the Church or family of God's children?

Now it is clear that in applying such a test we must look beneath a man's function in society and the pursuits which occupy his chief energies to the dominant motive of the whole personality. All are not apostles or prophets: there must be room for the specialist, as St. Paul fully recognised. The whole life of humanity is enriched by variety of vocation, as it is by the great "natural" varieties of sex and race. Each one of us has his own aptitudes, his own talent; and it is unlikely that his highest development can be reached except by recognising and employing them. Nor is such specialism necessarily a narrowing thing, provided only that the pursuit of it is not made an end in itself. In any calling that is in itself true and honest and just and pure and lovely and of good report, men can serve God; in ministering to the needs of His children they take upon themselves a high, even a sacramental office: in realising their function as members of a divine society they will gain a sense of purpose and of proportion, and their service, instead of being a slavery, will be transfigured

into a freely given contribution to the welfare of the whole. We have lately seen how when national need became all-absorbing men and women were ready not only to undertake tasks with a zest astonishing even to themselves, but to produce work of a quality far above their previous best, work performed with an exhilaration which gave to menial duties a savour of romance. And we know too how immensely the powers of each one of us are heightened under the stimulus of an adequate motive. Given an impulse worthy to enlist his devotion, the most ordinary of human beings transcends himself: instincts are controlled, obstacles overcome, inconsistencies straightened out, health restored, faculties enhanced, the whole personality is enlarged and finds in the service of its chosen end its freedom and its happiness.

That this "inspiration of the ideal" is the secret of growth, that it unifies and transforms, will hardly be questioned. Psychologists and educationalists are agreed in pointing to it as the source of power. Nor will it be disputed that to men and women of different temperaments inspiration comes under forms appropriate to them. The good, the true, the beautiful, each of these has power to liberate in certain of us potentialities irresponsive to any other appeal: so far as they can be separated no one of them is universally adequate, and those who are satisfied with one alone develop one side of their natures to the exclusion of all else. Religion, which has been too frequently identified with morality, has lost incalculably by being so treated; for to identify religion with ethics is only one degree less

disastrous than to separate it from them. Ethical ideals, as has been proved over and over again, do not of themselves transform mankind : indeed, if not enriched by something deeper, they produce too often nothing but despair. For men need not an example only, but the power to achieve it. St. Paul's analysis of the war in his members is true to the general experience ; most of us know, vaguely perhaps and not often fully, what we ought to do and be, but are conscious only of our impotence. If the Sermon on the Mount stood alone, we might accept the cynicism of those who declare that life can never be conducted in accordance with it.

In order to make it possible for His disciples to fulfil the new and golden law, Jesus appealed to a deeper quality in their nature. If it was from His own relation to God that He was able to see and declare the true conduct of man, it was only in so far as His followers shared that relationship that they would bear the fruits characteristic of the Kingdom. So in a multitude of parables He trained their spiritual sensibilities, helping them to learn the reality of the supernatural from its presence in Nature. If they have eyes to see and ears to hear, then they can gain entrance to a new world, to that Kingdom which is at once around and within. And as they enter it they will do so in virtue of the purity of heart and singleness of vision which are the secret of æsthetic and intellectual life. The faculty of living eternally, of realising in and through phenomena the presence of the transcendent, Jesus instilled into His followers in order that living in the Spirit they might impress spiritual values upon the life of earth.

As it became a fixed habit of their minds to look for God and His Kingdom everywhere, as they grew used to living in the sense of His nearness, so they would gain that confidence in the ultimate triumph and present power of their cause which could alone inspire them to achieve in the moral sphere the heights to which Jesus called them. Here was a motive, adequate to sublimate and direct all their instincts, to unify their whole natures and to release in them capacities hitherto dormant or dissipated.

Yet it may be doubted whether this apprehension of the eternal would of itself have produced the full outpouring of Pentecostal grace. Life "in the heavenlies," life in complete self-forgetfulness and constant faith, is hard to attain. And the eye for spiritual things, profoundly as it may illuminate a man's whole outlook, is not, for the normal human being, the supreme source of inspiration. Vision is not the whole of religion, except when glowing with affection and capable not only of awe and ecstasy, but of love. Jesus when He had led His followers to see God in all their surroundings, in His varied parables from Nature and the doings of men, confronted them at last with Himself, the fulfilment of all the parables, "Whom say ye that I am?" is the culminating test in His training; and when Peter replied, "The Christ," the preliminary task of preparing them for Calvary and Pentecost was finished. It was as they came to see the God whose nature and operations they had been tracing in the mustard-seed and the leaven, the corn and the tares, the shepherd and the pearl-merchant, supremely revealed as incarnate in their Master,

that their whole personalities were saturated by the inflowing of the Divine. Then not only did each individual feel every faculty of his being so liberated and enhanced that he could only describe it as a rebirth, but the fellowship of the faithful found itself an organic body animated by a common life and responsive to a single motive. This double consequence is admirably summed up in a couple of sentences from a recent volume. Dr. Hadfield writes: "In its fundamental doctrine of love to God and man Christianity harmonises the emotions of the soul into one inspiring purpose, thereby abolishing all conflict and liberating instead of suppressing the free energies of men." Dr. Anderson Scott writes: "The coming of the Spirit is to be looked for rather by a group than by an individual, unless it be at the moment when the individual merges himself in the group. . . . The first result of the coming would be seen in the removal of diffinities. Christ being the centre, the centripetal forces would be found to exceed the centrifugal. . . . The common relation to a universal would outweigh all divisive relations to particulars."

3. *The fellowship.*—It is this ability of Christianity to create for the individual whose self-regarding instincts have been sublimated by an ideal appealing to every faculty of his being an organic unity with his fellows which distinguishes it among the religions of humanity. The vision of a theocracy, of a nation holy in itself and in all its members, had inspired all that was noblest in Israel; and the great prophets in their revolt against legalism and the cultus had sketched its outlines. But the dynamic which

they could employ had proved insufficient: love, not law nor sacrifices, could alone achieve its fulfilment, and love came only when men recognised and confessed God incarnate in His Son. Then for the first time was made attainable a state in which society and its component units, dominated by the same motive and moving towards the same goal, could discover the true liberty, the liberty of whole-souled, consistent and voluntary service, when every member found every function of his nature concentrated upon and unified by a loyalty which, because it was operative over his corporate as well as his personal life, involved no disharmonies and no compromises. For the Christians of those first generations there was no question of other allegiance —duty to self or family or nation were all swept aside unless they could be seen as duty to God. "They dwell," said the second-century writer to Diognetus, "in their own countries, but only as sojourners. . . . Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. . . . They find themselves in the flesh, and yet they live not after the flesh. Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven." It seems almost as if for a few years the little communities of Christians came near to realising St. Paul's dream of the building up of redeemed humanity into one body animated and inspired by one life, wherein each individual consecrating his whole personality to the joyous fulfilment of his membership should find his own nature expanded by sympathy given and received and enriched by sharing in the manifold contributions of his fellows to the common weal.

That the source of power which Jesus taught His followers to discover in love to God, as God was revealed in Him, must necessarily involve the creation of a society is plain alike from the experience of the early Church and from the interdependence of every human being upon his fellows. It is too much to say that no one individual can live a full Christian life until the whole of mankind is Christian; but it is evident that the attempt to create an individualistic Christianity, and to represent religion as a love-affair between a lonely soul and its God, is false to Christ's whole method; for its logical outcome is the hermitage. "Let him that loveth God love his brother also" is a precept integral to the Gospel.

For in fact it is only when we are rapt out of ourselves by spontaneous sympathy for others that most of us begin to break loose from the prison of self-interest. Family life and the loving discipline of the home first train us to respond to higher motives than our own appetites. Friendship, and especially the first flowering of the emotional life which comes to us at our adolescence, gives a new if transient glory to existence and reveals the sheer joy of living for another. Sex and the love of man and woman can lead us further still into the understanding of the truth that selfishness is death and that to gain life we must lose ourselves in devotion of feelings and mind and will to another; for sex-love is only complete when it has ceased to be "an affair of the heart," has been tested and approved by the head, and has become an inseparable union in every activity of life. Nationality too

has its place in the process; and patriotism, though like sex it can be grossly misused, can call out qualities little short of the highest in man's nature. If they are real, all these natural relationships prepare us to look for our own highest development not in solitude, but in fellowship, not in a barren self-culture, but in the freedom and enrichment which come from loving service. To find God Himself as the ground and source of our devotion, and His world-wide family as the society of which we are members, is to reach the satisfaction of our natural yearnings, the goal to which our experience has already pointed.

(C) The Divine Society

This conception of humanity as a kind of organism whose life is the life of God permeating it as every member responds and yields to the appeal of the Divine love involves certain consequences.

A. For the individual it involves a recognition of his own true worth in relationship to God and the Divine society, a recognition both of what he is and of what he is not. He *is* a free and responsible member of the family, a "fellow-worker" compelled by no law save that of the love in which he finds his glory and his inspiration. "God loves me" confers an infinite value upon his individuality. Indeed the grandest gift bestowed upon any of us is to discover that someone knows us through and through; knows not only the face which we show to the world or the pose with which we flatter our self-respect, but all our secret shame and meanness,

the thoughts and deeds which we dread to reveal even to our own consciousness ; and knowing does not cast us off. When we reach such a friendship with our fellow men, our whole lives are transfigured by it : we are delivered from the sepsis of loneliness and introspection, and the wounds of sin are purged of their poison. We can face life sanely and cleanly, humble yet exalted. And if the giver of this healing love is God, then, though the effects of our sin remain and we know that we are mutilated and scarred, yet our penitence does not involve grovelling or despair. God loves us, being what we are ; and in the strength of that certainty we can start again to become what He would have us be.

But we learn also what we are not. If our individuality is glorified, if our poor talent takes a new preciousness because we have found One to whom it can be offered, we gain also a new appreciation of the gifts and graces of others. If love has in it a passion for utter union with its object, a passion which easily becomes jealous and narrow, it has also and equally a sheer joy in the beloved because he is not ourselves : his personality thrills us to awe and reverence by its eternal distinctness from our own : we are constantly discovering in him new depths of temperament, new powers of sympathy, new faculties, new resources, and the discovery, while it stimulates us to respond, floods our life with an ecstasy of thankfulness. In true sympathy there can be no envy : into it must enter a large element of worship. He is himself, not me ; and to absorb him in myself would be to degrade him and to destroy love. He is himself, and yet

he loves me. Alongside of union goes differentiation —that is perhaps one meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity: at least it is fundamental to a right understanding of corporate life. For to see our fellows with a spontaneous respect for their freedom and personalities, to rejoice in the little peculiar gifts which each can contribute to the common store, to realise their faults without self-flattery and to heal them without self-righteousness, this is to catch something of the Spirit of Jesus, which is the Spirit of God.

B. For the society it involves three things: (1) the existence of a personal relationship between all its members; (2) the subordination of each to the service of the whole; (3) a constant recollection of the end which it is called to serve.

(1) We are united not by any legal or local bond, but by our birthright as children of one Father. Each has his own freedom; each is a person. And in such a case he can never be treated mechanically as a mere convenience or a mere cipher. How vast a change the acceptance of this truism would produce in our habits of thought and action may be seen if we contrast our attitude towards the wrongs of which we read and those where we know and understand the wrongdoers. Nathan's parable is typical. So long as the guilt affects one whose personality is to us simply an abstraction, we can cry out, "The man that has done this thing shall surely die." The blaze of moral indignation consumes us with a passion for the punishment of the sinner; only if he is visited with retribution can our sense of justice be appeased.

We lose all desire to understand his point of view, or even to treat him as we would treat ourselves: he has ceased to be human, save that he has a life which we can destroy with torment. But suppose that between us and him there has been the touch of person upon person, so that we know his motives and limitations and temptations, suppose that we love him, then the dominant cry is not, "Let him die," but "How can he be saved?" We shall not loathe his sin the less, rather will our suffering be infinitely more bitter. But instead of the lust to kill there will be in us only the desire to enable him to recover. Knowing him we may still feel that punishment, even death, is the best consequence for him and for the community. But it will be love that strikes. He will never become a thing, a case, a criminal; never be less than a person, a prodigal son like ourselves; and our purpose will be to help him as we best can to come to himself and arise and go to his Father.

At first sight it would appear that if we are to treat every case as a hard case, we shall plunge headlong into anarchy. For law depends upon generalisations; true justice is proverbially abstract justice; to sympathise with its victim is to have one's judgment warped by partiality; it is to forfeit all consistency in favour of sheer casuistry and special pleading. It is not for nothing that St. Paul, when he laid down the great claim that "all things are lawful unto me," and attacked law as impotent to do more than define and stimulate evil, was accused of antinomianism, or that he so constantly struggles to meet the charge of under-

mining the strongholds of morality. It is not for nothing that in our corporate and even our personal dealings we lapse back so easily from Christ to Moses, from the liberty and crushing responsibility of the life of grace to the cut-and-dried sanctions and prohibitions of legalism. For the way of love is not easy, even when love is understood to mean the sentiment rather than the tender emotion. Sympathy, its necessary condition, implies the sublimation of instincts and the abandonment of habits ingrained in us through the ages. For most of us a truly personal relationship exists only within the narrow circle of our intimates: we can hardly begin to regard even our acquaintances in such a light: the mass of mankind are names to us and nothing more, and their presence rather repels than attracts. To love them, to feel for each one of them a distinct and personal friendliness, seems wholly impossible; and the difficulty of it is vastly increased by the change from a rural to an urban type of civilisation. At our best we seem only capable of a "love of humanity" which is often as impersonal as a love of postage-stamps, a philanthropy as "cold as charity." Is it not cant to claim that we can love all men? Are we not forced to adopt a double attitude, "one to face the world with, and one to show a woman when we love her?"

Such doubts are natural and must be honestly faced. We cannot expect to begin except at the beginning—within those lesser groups with which our sympathies naturally lie. But to stop at that is our shortcoming, a part of the huge problem of the behaviour of the would-be Christian in an un-

Christian world, to which we shall turn later. Meanwhile, and whatever our actual difficulties, we can admit that such a personal bond linking us all together would be capable of re-creating the whole life of mankind. And we can see how even here and now we can train ourselves for it.

St. Paul's attitude is specially illuminating. Accused, as we have said, of opening the door to licence by his gospel of liberty, he declares and in his own actions proves that this is not the case. Love is an authority not less but far more exacting in its demands than law; for law is concerned only with conduct, and a bare conformity with its regulations is all that it can secure, while love touches motive and affects not only what we do but what we are. All things may be lawful, but plainly all things are not expedient. And to decide where our true course lies is not now a matter of rule of thumb, of statute and precedent, but involves a searching answer to the questions, "What will best secure the building-up of the body in love?" or "What is God's will for His children, and how in this particular issue can I best interpret and fulfil His will?" It is very notable that it is by his sympathetic perception of the needs of the body corporate that St. Paul tests the validity of his personal judgments, that he, the Jew with his Greek training and Roman citizenship, transcends the limitations of character and education and reaches something of the universality of his Master. To keep sensitive to the guidance of the Spirit, to shape our conduct by it, and in so doing to serve the highest needs of our brethren is to live under an authority as much

transcending law as a living friend transcends a machine, an authority which secures obedience just because its demands are based not upon compulsion but upon love.

(2) But if every member of the body is himself a person with full and equal rights and responsibilities, this does not mean that there will be no differentiation of function, no subordination, no obedience. Each has his own office; eye and ear, foot and hand, are equal in "honour" but not identical in the manner of their service to the whole. And in any organism there must be some whose task is that of leadership, some who can under God co-ordinate and control the activities of the whole. In these days, when the virtue of obedience and the value of discipline are so generally criticised, it is necessary to point out that however utilitarian, mechanical and soulless they may be, their existence is essential unless society is to be reduced to pandemonium. Correlation of parts is a condition of life both for the individual and the fellowship. In such a body as we have been considering, where all the members are united to one another and to God freely and by love, the formal assertion of authority will be reduced to a minimum; for those who exercise it will be saved from the pride and self-seeking which identifies delegated responsibilities with personal merit, and regards its own advantage as synonymous with the common welfare. Government would be democratic in the sense that there would be equality of opportunity for all and that those selected to rule would do so with the consent of their fellow-members, but it would escape the present perversion

of democracy, wherein too often authority is vested in the hands of a committee representative of rival or partisan interests, and with no possibility of reaching more than a highest common factor of agreement. If the whole community were controlled by a single ideal, authority would be exercised in the spirit of fellowship rather than of superiority, of a religious order, not of a state : the meek would rule, as servants, not as lords, and obedience would be that of sons, not of slaves. Under such conditions there is nothing demeaning in obedience, nothing to provoke resentment in subordination. Jealousy and the ambition from which it springs may be the subtlest and most persistent of all the manifestations of self-regard : even the Apostles only lost them when they passed through the fire of Calvary, when at last love triumphed, transforming them into the sheer delight of fulfilling the proper task with all the powers and into a selfless pride in the excellence of others. If St. Paul could draw metaphors and examples from the athletes of his time, surely we may point to the sportsmanship of our own for an illustration : if no member of a team covets the captaincy or asks more than the opportunity to use his own skill when required, and if the captain can rely on them all to do what he tells them without grumbling or envy, surely it is not impossible in the Divine society to maintain a spirit of comradeship in adventure not less free from bitterness and arrogance.

(3) And if such a fellowship seems hopelessly unattainable, we believe that as both the members and the body devote themselves to the end for

which they exist, the difficulties will disappear. God's human family was not created for purposes of mutual admiration, for that hearty recognition of its own merits which sometimes masquerades as Christian comradeship. Its task here and always is the same—to do His will, to work with Him for His greater glory, to share in the creative and redemptive activity of love. We shall consider later the problem of the behaviour of Christians in an unconverted world, when we have surveyed in greater detail the forces that are opposed to us. Here it is enough to claim that Jesus Himself never failed to stress the magnitude or the urgency of the adventure to which He commissioned His followers. Whatever be the precise significance of His use of Apocalyptic, it at least served to impress on them that they were living in a time of crisis. And rightly viewed every hour is critical. In these tremendous days, at least, there is need to remember His claims upon us. And in the light of them, if once they are fully realised, the unattainable becomes the actual, and idealism is merely common-sense. For when great deeds are in the doing, and great dangers being faced, and a great cause served, the values of which we have written are called into eminence. Material standards and artificial distinctions lose their meaning. The real man slips off the mask and reveals his true self. There is no room for shams and lies, for false modesty or false dignity. Hope, self-sacrifice and comradeship—these three were noted as the first impression made upon a new-comer to the line by the fighting soldiery; and every crisis evokes them. In calm weather we may grumble and swagger

and criticise the captain of the ship: in a storm there is no time for such things; we can only thank God for discipline, and trust our shipmates, and do our best. And if once we could see the present opportunity and responsibility of Christendom, if we could shake off our comfortable optimism and conventionality and acquiescence in defeat, if we could recover a due appreciation of the grandeur and romance of taking part in "the lost fight of virtue," if we could imagine ourselves a handful of men and women sent out like the Apostles to go and baptise all nations, we should awake. And still the Master cries, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace"; and still they are hid from our eyes.

Needless to say it is because we are convinced that a full, unified and harmonious life is God's will for men, that the society in which it could be attained is under God no merely utopian dream, and that the supreme task of Christians now as always is to call mankind to work and suffer for its realisation, that this Report is being presented. Far from agreeing with those who declare that there can be no such thing as a Christian sociology, or Christian economics, we would urge that it is only in so far as the scientific study of the problems of man's corporate life takes account of the revelation in Christ and of the power manifested by Him, that it is true to human nature and that its conclusions are worthy of respect. Indeed, judged by the test of history, that is, by the test of fruits, it is plain that none of the substitutes which the materialism of the last century or the empiricism of the last five years has set up have

much reason to claim support. Christianity alone in all the culture of Western Europe has succeeded (if only partially and for a time) in transforming mankind and creating a fellowship fit for humanity. Christianity alone has lived through the bankruptcy of a civilisation. Its acceptance might yet save us from a repetition of that experience—a repetition which at present it seems that nothing else can avert.

CHAPTER IV

GOD AND SIN

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(A) The Failure of Mankind

To outline an ideal, to show that it satisfies the needs and aspirations of humanity, to be convinced that nothing else will, in the long run, be found practicable, and to devote oneself to its advocacy, is but half, and the easier half, of the Christian's task. He has still to consider why it is that after nearly two thousand years his ideal, so congruous and appealing, so loyally and resolutely served, has apparently commended itself so little to the general conscience. It is true that the record of the *Gesta Christi* is full of encouragement, and that Mr. Chesterton's oft-quoted dictum is more epigrammatic than just; but if there is no sufficient foundation for the moments of pessimism to which all are liable, there is good reason to examine the principal reasons which have thwarted the efforts of Christians. To underrate our own weakness or the difficulties of our task is to invite and to deserve disaster. All who desire to build the City of God must first sit down and count the cost.

We have already indicated that the character of the material environment in which we are placed imposes definite limitations upon the free activities

of mankind. Although we believe that matter is not wholly obdurate nor impervious to the action of spirit, it is plain that Nature must be understood before she can be controlled, and that at present our knowledge both of her and of the psychic and spiritual elements in ourselves is relatively slight. In both directions our ignorance handicaps us in working for social righteousness; for we can only act in accordance with what we now know, not with what we expect or hope ultimately to achieve. The progress of scientific knowledge in the physical and in the psychological spheres will doubtless reveal to us new and perhaps revolutionary possibilities, placing at our disposal fresh stores of wealth and energy and teaching us how we may use them more fully and wisely. Meanwhile we can only accept and act upon what we possess—with the reasonable confidence that what we do is tentative and that at any moment our resources may be vastly enlarged.

To take an illustration. A century ago Malthus, calculating the available food-supply of the world and the rate of increase of its population, proclaimed the doctrine that the reproduction of mankind would always be in excess of the capacity of the earth to support its human inhabitants, that disease, famine and vice were inevitable for the elimination of the surplus, and that the masses must always live at the level of bare subsistence. His views were naturally regarded with horror by those who accepted unintelligently a cheerful belief that "God will provide"; and they were exploited by those who resisted all social reform in the interests of a policy of *laissez-faire*. But deeply as our feel-

ings may be shocked by the cold and seemingly inhuman logic of the early economists, Malthus and his followers were doing good service in forcing their generation to abandon its sentimentality and face the fundamental problems of economic and political science. And these problems still remain, though Malthus' original argument and the theories of Ricardo and of Marx which were based upon it cannot now be justified. During the century three lines of answer to Malthus have been developed. In the first place his postulate of the absolute limit of natural resources has been seriously shaken by the progress of science. The discovery of fresh sources of energy, improvements in the method of agriculture and manufacture, the opening up of new countries, the development of transport and commerce, have shattered his statistics; and the possibility of a still more startling extension of our powers from the researches of the physicists make it unsafe to predict any limit to the natural capacity of the earth. Secondly, even in Malthus' time his argument would have been more cogent if the existing wealth had been less unequally divided, and the progress towards an order of society in which the struggle for existence shall be less crudely animal has already done much to modify his conclusions. Finally, and ultimately of more importance still, is the factor of moral restraint which Malthus introduced into the second edition of his essay. The rapid fall of the birth-rate in civilised countries, whatever be the Christian verdict upon the means used to attain it, shows that mankind is awakening to its responsibility in the matter and

no longer regards the careless production of large families with unqualified approval.

Yet although it is impossible to speak dogmatically, as if the conditions of our environment were rigid and unalterable, it is plain that at present economic considerations impose a definite constraint upon the progress of reform. Until we grasp this sorry scheme of things entire, we cannot shatter it to bits and rebuild it nearer to the heart's desire. We must be content to cut our coats according to our cloth; to pay due regard to the guidance of those who have studied the problems of our material life, and to translate our dreams into the region of practicality. And it is not only in the play of natural forces that we find ourselves subject to necessity. There is an equal rigidity in some of the conditions of man's own activity. In his dealings with Nature, in his pursuit of wealth, he cannot step outside the realm of law. Sociology and psychology disclose to him a framework of unescapable conditions. It is true that in economics, sociology and psychology generalisations are often advanced as ultimate laws which are only attempts to perpetuate habits and customs, usually bad habits and customs. But there are laws in these sciences even if their nature be but imperfectly understood; J. S. Mill, for example, perceived that some economic laws depend on unchanging characteristics of Nature, while others are merely descriptions of possibly modifiable characteristics of men. The law of diminishing returns was his example of the first kind of economic law. This may not be a permanent law, though it is likely to be, and so long

as it is true the problem of population and food supply will compel human attention. But some of the economic laws that describe elements in human nature are also unchangeable. The law of diminishing utility describes a fundamental psychological fact. The fundamental economic activity, the attempt to get the greatest possible satisfaction from our resources, is a simple necessity of life which we cannot escape. If the full sense be given to the word "economise," we are bound to economise. There is a truth in the much-abused phrase, "Business is business." For if an archangel were to go into business, his chief activity would turn on making the best use of his means of production and securing the largest return in real wealth for the energy expended. Christianity has much to say as to the nature of true wealth, but it obviously does not criticise the economic activity itself. Christianity does not promise to set us free from the necessity of earning our bread by the sweat of our brows. In fact, it bids us feel uncomfortable if we are getting our bread in any other way.

But after all, the fixity of our resources, though it imposes very definite conditions on our progress, is not of itself the main obstacle to the realisation of the Kingdom. Unpopular as the word has become to certain sections of modern life, the enemy now as of old is sin—the wrongdoing of individuals and of society. We must deal with this somewhat more fully in both its aspects, the personal and the corporate, for it is evident that here lies the fundamental cause of our failure; and evident too that Christianity is essentially neither

a way of knowledge nor of morality, but of salvation. "He shall save His people from their sins"—that was the primary task of Jesus; and if His religion cannot fulfil it, if it merely shows mankind an ideal without setting men free to fulfil it, then it has failed—failed wholly in the very matter in which failure is disastrous.

For it is plain to any observer that man's condition is a parody of God's purpose in human history; and this is perhaps the best line along which to restate in modern terms any doctrine of a "Fall." Man as we know him does fall below any pattern worthy even of humanity's limited vision of Divine Wisdom and Love. He feels at his best and most conscious a craving to get right; yet he can neither understand nor fulfil the dimly apprehended purpose of God by the development of his innate capacities alone. His push-up "from below" has to be completed by something freely given him "from above," and willingly accepted and used. He needs Grace, the energy of God, if he is to be redeemed from his animal past and the misdirections of impulse which have accompanied his emergence from it. The Incarnation, in which human nature was found capable of expressing God's fullest self-revelation, is an earnest that humanity can so be redeemed.

"To will God completely is to have Him," said St. Augustine. *Not* to will God completely is to fall short of reality, to fail to actualise all the possibilities of life; since "We are only real in so far as we are His order and He is in us." The responsibility of man abides in the fact that he is able, at

least dimly, to realise this, and is called by the united witness of creation to live according to his best lights. Hence, for him, knowingly to be out of God's order is "sin"; and the presence of sin in human life means a reduction in the reality of that human life, a steady devitalisation of the individual or corporate soul. The wages of sin, in the deepest sense, is death. God's order, since Christians hold His creative Spirit to be Love, must involve the development and explication (perhaps in relation to the human time-span very slow) of all that is implicit in perfect love. The question here for us is not whether this full explication will take place within the theatre of what we know as the physical world. Wherever and however it takes place, we may be sure that every movement towards the triumph of love serves its ends. So too in human life, the way out and up, the only safe field for the soul's expanding energy, must be found in the practice of that same pure love; which, says St. Thomas Aquinas, "alone has no limit to its increase, for it is a certain participation in the Infinite Love which is the Holy Spirit." Sin represents everything which opposes or checks this process of the unfolding and fulfilment of Love: sanctity, the soul's achievement of it.

1. *Personal sin.*—Religion has tended to resume under the name of sin several quite different sorts of wrongfulness and checks to the triumph of love. Historically the word sin denotes any tendency, character or action discordant with God, whether virtually present or deliberately purposed. This failure to realise the whole mind of God is due in

some measure to the incompleteness of our development. There is a truth, though by no means the whole truth, in the saying that sin is ignorance. Much of the pain and shame of life are due to our inability to understand and control our environment. To live in conformity with Nature and with Nature's God would involve a knowledge of the conditions of spiritual and physical health and a complete compliance with them. In this respect, vastly as mankind has developed, it is likely that we are still in our infancy. Religion and science join hands in their common task of discovering and fulfilling the content of the Divine purpose : science, mental, moral and physical, shows us the means to fullness of life ; religion enables us to use those means to their proper end.

Our ignorance is reinforced by the constant tendency to relapse to lower levels of response, to hark back to behaviour which was once justifiable and even necessary, but is now outgrown. In this drag-back to primitive standards, in the invitation of animal impulse to conduct discordant with God, we can still find justification for a doctrine of Original Sin. The first human animal, inevitably preoccupied with his own material interests and the safe establishment of his race, could not but bequeath to his descendants instincts which, if uncontrolled by civilised and socialised man, have the character of sin. Many of our sins are capitulations, more or less rationalised, to such animal impulses ; as, for example, when modern commerce and finance take a sinful character from the opportunity they give to the acquisitive, combative and other forms of the

primary instinct of self-preservation to assert themselves in a crude form. Some of these impulses are gratified in our games, dances and sports, which have in the civilised state an important cathartic office to perform as safety-valves for energy. But such impulses as these, being as they are our most vigorous springs of action, ought neither to be repressed nor merely run off into useless if safe channels of expression. They should be redeemed and made to do work for Christ. Experience proves, and psychology explains, that those instincts which are the raw material of character can be sublimated, that is, diverted from their original and primitive ends and redirected to purposes which satisfy the individual and are of value to the community.

Ignorance and even atavism, while providing the conditions of our moral conflict, mark the stage of our development rather than its direction. Individuals vary enormously in respect to them, so that one man's task seems easy and another's incalculably hard, with the compensation that the fiercer the struggle the greater the victory, and the larger the resources made available by it for future attainment. We may not have moved far along the road to our goal: that is a relative matter and in itself comparatively unimportant. The real obstacle to progress is the fact that we so constantly stray from the path and turn our backs upon God, or if careful to avoid actual error are content to stand still when we ought to be moving. Sin as involving guilt is this misdirection of our energies; it is a wrong attitude towards the true purpose of life. Sins, particular acts of transgression, are only symptoms.

To remedy them piecemeal is by no means to cure the disease; for abstention from wrongdoing, the negative virtue which we associate with conscientiousness, is in itself a wholly different thing from positive virtue, the hunger and thirst after righteousness. Sins of omission are condemned by Jesus Christ at least as strongly as those of commission. That is why the law failed. It might warn men of error and put up a fence along their road; it could not inspire them with power or impel them to go forward. The escape from sin is thus properly called conversion; for it is a turning round of the whole personality from self to God.

These more or less deliberate misdirections of our efforts have been variously classified by moral philosophers. For our purpose we may distinguish two elements, perversion or deordination and rebellion.

Perversion is a wrongful direction and balance of present impulses and interests. It is concerned with *attention* and *interest*, the controlling factors of our conative life. The total concentration of interest on anything less than God, an excessive preoccupation with matters good in themselves but distracting if placed in the foreground of life—in fact, lack of proportion—covers a wide range of behaviour which deflects from God's purpose, and thus has the character of sin. Such perversions are largely responsible for the wrongs and confusions of social life; and the practical application of St. Augustine's definition of virtue as "the ordering of love"—*i. e.* the direction to right objects of man's will and desire—might do great things for

us. The deordination of love leads below the full human level to the aberrations of impurity, greed and sloth; and on the human level to the capital sins of pride and self-centredness—varieties and degrees of egoism. Deordination might be regarded as the Freudian *libido* taking an unchristian path; and producing on the level of sense an unbalanced craving for material goods, sensual pleasure, aggrandisement, self-satisfactions, whether personal or corporate; on the level of spirit the soul-stifling entanglements of self-adoration, self-gratification and self-cultivation. National pride, class hostilities, passionate clingings to self-chosen comforts and rights; all these in the clear light of Christ are perceived to be perversions of human will and desire, signs of the impurity and maldirection of man's love.

It would be superficial as well as unchristian to deny the obvious existence, both in the individual and in the social order, of deliberate and conscious rebellion against God, and of hostility to His purposes. It is part of man's freedom that he should possess this capacity both for conscious obedience to and for conscious revolt from the moral demand: a being incapable by his very nature of falling away from or rejecting his best lights would not be man at all. The willing concurrence of the personality in that which it knows to be wrong involves a degree of sinfulness different in kind from the relapses to lower levels and failures to sublimate impulse, or the vagaries of unmortified desires. Here we reach positive moral guilt, as distinct from weakness or instability: the fullest, but also the

rarest degree of human sin—the apotheosis of pride and self-will. Any scheme of redemption which aims at bringing back the society or the individual into accord with the purposes of God must reckon with its existence; and must not content itself with rectifying those tendencies to regression and to aberration which haunt human instability and are doubtless the source of the greater part of man's wrongfulnesses and failures.

2. *Corporate sin.*—If evil were simply a personal affair with consequences limited to the individual wrongdoer, the problems occasioned by it would be relatively simple, although if each one of us could suffer and suffer alone for his own errors, the chief incentive to moral effort would be a selfish one, and in consequence inadequate. But, men being members one of another, if it is true that when one member suffers the whole body suffers with it, it is not less true that the whole society is involved in the sin of each individual. The consequences of every evil action, even the most apparently personal, act and react upon those who are wholly innocent of it. I sin, and my nearest and dearest are the first but not the last to feel its effects. And this is true not only of acts of rebellion, but of the ignorances and blindness, the prejudices and mistakes of us all. Indeed the simplest lesson of the Cross is its revelation of the true bitterness of sin: men like ourselves, men not specially wicked, men narrowly pious like the Pharisees, and worldly-wise like the Sadducees, and harassed by practical difficulties like Pilate, and disappointed of a mistaken hope like the common people, crucified the

innocent; the world's supreme tragedy draws its universal appeal from the normal human qualities of those who perpetrated it. In them humanity passed sentence upon its judge, and in so doing was itself judged and condemned. There was no one great act of special wickedness—unless it be in Iscariot: the Cross was in one aspect simply the consequence of a multitude of common human errors, the action of characters formed, as are we all, by countless seemingly insignificant misuses of our freedom of choice and therefore almost inevitably constrained to reject their Lord. No one individual was solely responsible, no one individual can disassociate himself from participation in similar guilt.

And in this consists the primary quality of corporate sin. The effect of a vast number of selfish and therefore God-denying lives is to create a mass-consciousness tolerant of selfishness, a mass-consciousness against which even the most altruistic find it almost impossible to contend unless they are prepared to face martyrdom, and by which the lax and loose-fibred find themselves swept away. It is plain that men and women acting in a corporate capacity accept and even initiate practices of which privately they would be ashamed. It is unthinkable that any one individual would have sent Christ to the Cross: public opinion fortifies the evil instincts and lulls the conscience. It takes courage and conviction to resist it, even if a clear opportunity to do so presents itself. And in fact such an opportunity is a rare occurrence. There is in most cases no single decisive moment; at each step the individual finds himself already committed to a course

from which he can hardly break away without disloyalty to his fellows. The inducements to acquiescence are so many and so subtle. "Who am I that I should protest against what better men accept? One cannot move faster than the world." "Have I not a duty to society? If I share its advantages I must take the rough with the smooth." "If I act, I shall sacrifice friends and family and achieve nothing; surely to accept the standards of society and work quietly from within it for their improvement is the way which Christ chose when He became incarnate? If He did not rebel against slavery, why should I?" The weight of such questionings consists in the fact that they are not wholly unjustifiable.

We have raised these arguments now merely to illustrate the character of corporate sin; we shall discuss them in a later section. Meanwhile we would simply note that in any ancient society where habits of thought and methods of organisation have become securely established, the individual member finds himself almost inevitably a partaker in other men's sins, sins for which he cannot be held personally responsible and which, however influential he may be, he cannot single-handed either eradicate or even wholly escape. While we are anxious not to exaggerate the difficulties of the struggle against corporate evil, or to put a limit to the power which a group of consecrated and fearless reformers could accomplish, it is plain that it is through corporate action, following upon a multitude of individual protests and possibly martyrdoms, that change is effected. And history proves over and over again

how rapidly this can take place. Public opinion, if it is naturally inclined to laxity, is not essentially in favour of evil: its failure is the result of sloth and ignorance and doubts of the possibility of alteration rather than of active ill-will. And when once a cause is so presented as to capture the imagination and touch the heart, the whole outlook of a community can be transformed and action hitherto regarded as impracticable achieved in a space of time so brief as to startle even those who denounce most vigorously the fickleness and instability of the populace.

It is important to notice that under the conditions of to-day the corporate life has become not only far stronger but far more plastic. The aggregation of vast masses of people into cities, the multiplying of contacts, the spread of education, the creation of a press and a platform which aim at influencing the whole body politic, have affected the whole relationship of the individual to society. The interdependence of each of us upon his fellows has taken the place of the old self-sufficiency of the household. A century ago every large estate, and to a considerable extent every family, was a self-contained unit, supplying the majority of its own needs by its own labour and living in comparative economic isolation. The nation was hardly a unity so much as a federation: public opinion, apart from the views of a number of influential landowners, hardly existed: the individual was to a vast extent dependent upon his own resources. We are often told that the Church to-day produces no Wesleys, that leadership of the familiar historical

type, the leadership of a single dominant personality, is no longer discoverable. Those who bring such charges seem to ignore the change of circumstances. Of old the evangelist or reformer had mainly to rely upon convincing individuals and small groups: his task involved great exertion—long journeys—endless speaking—a multitude of detailed and personal activities; but he had comparatively few rivals and little effective public opinion against him. To-day such a worker has to contend against world-wide and highly organised interests, against a press which is suspicious or hostile, against the distraction of a multitude of other claims on popular attention, and against the complexity of the social order, in which conversion in the old sense is becoming more and more difficult. Wesley if he won a household could set its members to live out their faith with comparative ease: their lives were independent of others, their sins were mainly such as by God's grace they could fight and conquer for themselves. Nowadays the household no longer stands alone: it is linked by countless ties, social and industrial, economic and political, with the common life of the nation and of the world. Social evils and industrial exploitations in South America or China directly affect and infect the life of Britain. Each citizen is no longer a single combatant against evil: he is a member of a highly organised army and his own ability to fight is conditioned by the army's activity or capitulation: if in any particular it refuses to join battle it is difficult for its members not to give up the conflict.

If we think of sin in the older fashion as a matter

for each person and for him alone, and try to apply this conception to modern conditions, the task may well seem hopeless. But if the process of organisation, the process which has unified the world and threatens to submerge the individual in the multitude, has immensely weakened if not destroyed the methods of a century ago, it has also opened up new possibilities. The ease and speed with which successful experiments can be made known, the world-wide influence of ideas, the repercussion of a single event upon the whole life of mankind and the very force of public opinion itself, are not symptoms to be set down as adverse: rather they present an unrivalled opportunity. We have reached for the first time in human history a point at which rapid and universal evangelism has become possible. If the corporate life is lax and low, it is not so inevitably: if it is disciplined and organised, this solidarity can be used for religion as easily as against it: if evils, new or newly-recognised, hold us in thrall, mankind once realising its power can break the chains. If Christians will understand the changed circumstances of the time, and the need to meet corporate evil by corporate effort, the Church which was from the first a fellowship and has so powerfully assisted in the creation of political and social communities, has only to take up the side of her task which she has tended to neglect, at least since the Reformation, in order to influence profoundly and possibly with the speed of apocalyptic, the future destiny of man.

And to such a task we are called by the tragedy of innocent suffering. As corporate life grows more

complex, the massacre of the innocents becomes more evident. It is in lives diseased and stunted and thwarted through no fault for which they can be held personally responsible that mankind finds its strongest incentive to spiritual effort. As we learn to recognise in the Cross a call to corporate as well as individual penitence and conversion, as we discover that all sin involves incalculable and inevitable consequences upon the well-being of the community, and must be expiated in the blood and tears of others, sin in all its aspects becomes a thing intolerable, an outrage to humanity as it has always been an outrage to God. And salvation becomes no longer a matter solely or principally of the saving of one's own soul, but rather a consecration to service for their sakes, lest one of the Father's little ones perish through our indifference or callousness or vice. And recognising the feebleness of our lonely efforts, Christians will rediscover the meaning of the Church, of that fellowship of the followers of Jesus which exists in order to fulfil its double purpose, the conversion of the sinful and the building up of a society in whose life the children of the Kingdom can find a home.

(B) The Means of Recovery

The Christian recognition of sin, of all the tendencies in life which impede or conflict with the love and will of God, is balanced and completed by the recognition of redemption as a real fact of Christian experience, whereby the individual or society is established on new levels of freedom and

power, living for and in the things of God. Religion, and especially Christianity, can and does generate an energy which transmutes the very stuff of human life, overcoming that ingrained irresponsibility which some moralists consider the essence of "original" sin. Such redemption can no more be expressed in terms of law than the fact of Christ can be expressed in terms of science. It involves, so far as our human realisation is concerned, the fresh coming in of power and of life, in an exhibition of the free, spontaneous action of God; and if on the one hand the inpouring of redemptive love and power is the response of God to man's need, faith and desire, on the other, such consciousness of need and such acts of faith and desire are themselves the earnest of the Divine energy working on the soul—"the Spirit prayeth in us." The central fact of redemption is the losing of the egocentric life in order to find the complete and theocentric life. It is a freeing of the soul's energy for the purpose for which it was intended, and involves the gradual or abrupt utter turning-over of the individual or society to the interests of God. The redeemed or fully Christianised individual or group has access to new sources of power; and in this power can and should face the complexities and oppositions of the human world and deal with them; becoming in its turn a redeeming instrument in the hand of God. The object of Christian redemption is not a holy self-cultivation, but to "be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man." The redeemed personality must exhibit to others in some measure that saving, serving, unlimited love

by which he was himself redeemed. It follows from our previous consideration of sin, and its presence in all forms and degrees right through the fabric of human life, that full Christian redemption will only be worked by a power sufficiently strong to overcome the tendencies to regression, to aberration, and to rebellion which are present in the individual or society. It must therefore act directly on the impulsive nature, and not on reason alone; for it is called upon to effect the redirection of the whole of life. Such a psychological account of the redemption of personality is met and completed by the declaration of religion, that redemption can only be effected by faith and love of God; that is, the placing before individual or group of an assigned end so transcending all the ends proposed by self-interest, and so perfectly satisfying all the obscure cravings of the heart, as to bring about first a complete and generous surrender and then an eager self-dedication. This love and this faith brace the will to oppose the downward drag of atavistic impulses, and the inordinate desires of the self; and so concentrate both energy and feeling in their fullness upon the purposes of God revealed in Christ. The self in whom this surrender has been effected is redeemed not merely from the entanglements of sense, but from the far more deadly entanglements of spirit, the stultifying inclinations to self-adoration, self-gratification and self-cultivation.

The same necessities may be discovered to govern social redemption. This too is bound up in the need of a corporate surrender to the purposes of

God. The biological character of human development is such, that it has involved the setting up of innumerable worldly and self-interested habits. The cave-dweller's scale of values still largely prevails. Man's will is in origin a will to live in the narrow sense. If he is to achieve his full stature it must be transmuted into a will for life in the fullest sense, a sense oblivious of selfishness. This is reconciliation to the deepest purposes of the universe; and since our narrow consciousness, and in general our status as creatures, makes it impossible for us to grasp these purposes in any fullness, this is only possible to us by and through a loving and trustful surrender to such revelation of God's nature and love as we are able to grasp: we are reconciled to God in Christ. In this reconciliation we are redeemed from the limitations of the merely natural order, and are set on our feet as free spiritual entities, called by love and responding with love.

1. *Penitence.* — The process of redemption, whether corporate or personal, is found to demand certain conditions. It requires, in the first instance, a deep recognition of its necessity, a clear realisation of the state of sin from which we are to be redeemed; in other words, repentance. In the light of Jesus Christ we can perceive how far we lag behind, wander from, or oppose the love and will of God in our social or secret life. That is to say, He "convicts us of sin" and destroys that self-satisfaction which is an absolute bar to grace. When religion says that love and humility go together in the soul, and are the twin foundations of all spiritual life, it means that to yield oneself to God,

which is the ultimate form in which man can face reality, brings with it a drastic self-knowledge. The social repentance which must initiate social redemption equally involves a definite and heart-stricken attempt to see ourselves and the order we have created as we really are and it really is, unflinchingly facing reality. The application to our social problems of the touchstone of the love of God, at once accuses innumerable institutions, conventions and activities of cruelty, injustice and self-seeking. We are called upon as Christians to confess the extent to which society has capitulated to its disguised animal impulses and ingrained pride and self-love; and to apply the love of God revealed in Christ, not as an ideal but as a dynamic, trying to unify our vigorous corporate impulsive action with our still rudimentary corporate conscience, and so redeem the life and behaviour of society. This we shall do, as the individual must, not by repressing any of its miscellaneous instincts and tendencies, but by their utilisation: not undue simplification, but rich harmony best satisfies the ends of God as we glimpse them in life. Thus we may hope to rescue our social institutions and activities, and make it possible to say to the really penitent group as to the really penitent individual, "Go, and sin no more."

Such social redemption demands a social change of heart not to be confused with a change of feeling —a transformation and enhancement of will. As the Love and Will of God are one, and form together His Holy and Creative Spirit, so what humanity loves and what humanity aims at must be the same.

When, in human society, the cleavage between will and desire is abolished, society will be redeemed: just as each individual soul in which that disharmony is resolved on Christian levels is redeemed. This means the consecration of energy and intelligence as well as feeling: the remaking of the whole of human life in accordance with the spirit of Christ, so that not merely the Church but the whole social order becomes His mystical Body. So closely entwined are the truest corporate and the truest individual interests, that personal and social redemption cannot be dissociated. A perfect life can hardly be lived by us except in a perfect society; and a perfect society can only be brought about through the grace of God acting on certain individuals within it and inciting them to heroic actions in conformity with their apprehensions of Him.

2. *Grace*.—If it is the vision of God which shows us the character of sin and initiates in us a change of attitude towards it, it is from God, not from ourselves, that we draw the power to make this change of attitude effective. It is not enough to recognise and repent of evil: the burden of it would crush us into despair, if we had to rely only upon our own wills and our own strength in the struggle for freedom. The love which arouses in us a passion of self-contempt inspires also not only the desire but the power to make a fresh start. Here as always the operation of grace upon us is conditioned by our response. God is ever giving; we can refuse His gifts and shut out His influence. And in different people the method and effects of grace vary greatly. To one man it comes as a sudden

liberation: to another there may be no conscious moment of conversion; he grows up into a knowledge of God. Some receive grace from the regular use of means hallowed by the authority of the Church and attested by the experience of generations: others who reveal in their lives the evident fruits of the Divine Spirit have explored and developed their own ways of approach and communion. From them all there is a volume of testimony to the reality and effects of their experience: God gives Himself to them as they empty themselves to receive Him. Something is done for them which they could not do for themselves. In them, in spite of their heritage and quality, Divine grace is operative; and in certain saintly lives at least it culminates in that perfect freedom which St. Augustine describes as the *beata necessitas non peccandi*, the constraint which makes sin impossible.

3. *The means of grace.*—Grace must, however, not only be received, but sustained; for the redeemed life, like the natural life, requires food and self-expression in action, if it is to be healthy and vigorous. It must grow, or die out; it is not the attainment of a static condition. Its continued effectiveness, as a redeeming force within the world, depends on continued abiding in the Divine Order. A constant reaching out to God and willed communion with Him are the conditions of all effective Christian action. In religious language, man's love and prayer are both the occasions and the effects of grace. "I cannot do the work without God, and God may not or will not without me"—or, as the scholastics expressed it, Will and Grace rise and

fall together. Grace fully accepted by will, and will fully energised by grace, bring about that "world-conquering temper" characteristic of all full religion. The appearance and the triumphs of that temper in history assure us that the "power of Christ" is not an idle phrase; but, duly evoked and steadily fed and maintained, could effect unguessed transformations of the human world. The social or the individual will, fully energised by it, should be able to organise its whole surroundings about this principle.

A technical treatment of the traditional means of grace would be less appropriate to our purpose than an attempt to express their significance and efficacy in simple terms. We have seen that it is only when individuals by devoting themselves to a single end find their personalities enhanced and expanded and liberated, and by entering into a society whose whole order subserves and is permeated by this same common purpose, that full life is made possible for each and all. We have claimed that the end which can command such private and public devotion must be personal, since love, the relation of person to person, can alone satisfy every need of heart and head and will, of body, soul and spirit. And we have argued that love for God in Christ has had and still has this effect. It is in such terms, and using the analogy of human friendship as the least inadequate at our disposal, that we would speak of the means of grace, of the Church, of prayer and intercession, of corporate worship and of the sacraments.

The fundamental nature of the Church is plain

enough. It represents the fellowship of all those in whom is the desire for God, the mind of Christ, the influence of the Holy Spirit. When St. Paul speaks of Christ as " dwelling in us," he is not using a hyperbole or a metaphor, but stating a simple fact. He and his fellow-disciples had so responded to the appeal of their Master's love that they had begun to feel as He felt, to think His thoughts, and to reproduce His actions; these men and women had been literally remade by the inflowing of the Spirit of Christ. And sharing in their devotion to Him, they became, again literally, of one mind one with another. The common life animating them all was His life. They were one body, the physical instrument of one Spirit. Self no longer counted; for they had found One so all-absorbing that they had no room for anything but Him. Through suffering and failure and shame and utter penitence they had died unto sin and risen again to life in God.

Such a Church knows no boundaries of time or space: it is indeed the blessed company of all faithful people, the fellowship of the redeemed, the Communion of Saints. But since man is body as well as soul, and on earth can only express his spiritual relationships by membership in an earthly society, an outward organisation with ordinances and officers, a rite of initiation and corporate activities, of whatever kind, is a necessity. Jesus Christ declared that the new wine must be stored in new bottles, that the spiritual grace bestowed by Him would be dissipated unless it was given a visible embodiment. And from the first the Church

on earth has continued her mission, representing though not being identical with the Kingdom of God. Christians differ widely in their interpretation of the relation between the outward and the inward, and still more widely as to the precise nature, authority and organisation of the institution to which they belong. But it seems clear that some institution is necessary as a guide to the Way, a witness to the Truth, and a channel of the Life of Christ; and that membership in it is a necessary condition of spiritual health.

For the Church represents not only the corporate expression of the Christian life, but also its attachments with history. It gives to the fluctuating and individual aspirations and perceptions of its members the support of tradition as well as of comradeship. All phases and types of Christian experience, from the most naïve to the most sophisticated, can here make their contribution to the common life, and find their fullest opportunity of Christian action in a humbling self-subordination to the common good. And the Church repays, or should repay, this surrender of individualism by applying to the necessarily limited experience of the individual member the hoarded wisdom of the race. In its widest sense it includes all Christian souls living and dead, and those who truly enter into its fellowship enter also into communion with all saints.

It is true that most Christian communions as they exist at present are far from fully actualising their possibilities; and within these bodies an important step towards the Christianising of society

must consist in a rekindling, a fresh expression, of the corporate side of Christian life, a fuller realisation of the responsibility of each member for the life of his Church, and of the Church as a genuine means of access to a fuller life in God and a reservoir of spiritual power. The criticism of institutional religion which is now common, and more common among Christians than among those outside the official folds, is really a criticism of ourselves. We have, so to speak, let down our home-life, and so do not get from it the nurture and shelter which should fit us for working for Christ in the world.

If the Church exists primarily to symbolise and enrich the communion of His children with their Father, its chief activity must be the fostering of the means of communion, prayer and the sacraments, which are special and dramatised forms of prayer. For prayer is in its widest and truest sense the offering of all human activity to God; and therefore at once the condition and the culmination of the Christian life. It is both individual and corporate. For every member of the society is striving to bring his personality into full harmony with the Divine will, to open every channel of his being to the inflowing of Divine grace; and the first reason for the existence of the Church is that this private relationship with God may be extended to and accomplished in the sphere of social life. Each of us separately and all of us together are called to turn away from self and selfish interests, to surrender ourselves utterly to the love revealed to us in Jesus Christ, and to abide continually in the knowledge of God which is eternal life.

To do so involves escape from self, and we can only do so if we are freed from our egoism by contact with One who loves us, with One who satisfies all our desires, answers all our questionings and inspires all our activities. That is why true prayer normally begins with worship, with an effort to concentrate every faculty of our being upon God in adoration and penitence. As the reality of His presence makes its impact upon us we are lifted on to a different plane of existence. The prison-house of our animal heritage no longer confines us; the fetters of past sins slip off and are forgotten. God becomes all in all. As we lose ourselves in Him, His love and His power become operative in us; inspiration flows into us and through us to others. And when worship is expanded into petition and intercession, all that we are doing is to let this love and power range through us to those for whom we pray.

If this sounds remote or conventional, an illustration may give it meaning. Suppose that we are visited by someone in anxiety or distress who comes to us for advice or help. Our natural instinct at such a time bids us to be prudent and sympathetic; for we are slightly flattered by the visit and want to produce the right effect upon the visitor. If that is our frame of mind, if we are self-conscious, or, however slightly, affected, we may speak with the tongue of men and angels, but our friend will go away with nothing beyond what our knowledge and experience can give. He will not have been helped to see God. If, on the other hand, we have forgotten ourselves and our poses in spontaneous

interest in our visitor and contact with God, there will pass from us to him something not from ourselves. The words may be few, and as we look back we shall be conscious of their inadequacy, but he will have gained what we alone could never have given. God through us will have touched and healed. Now prayer is in this respect akin to inspiration. And as the inspired writers established contact with God and were able to transmit to others the Divine presence and power, so we in our measure, whether through the spoken word or the unspoken communion of soul with soul, can pass on that which we are receiving. The impulse given to us as we empty ourselves to receive it flows out from us. The light shining upon our spirits is reflected by them into the world.

We may well expand here our consideration of the reception of grace through persons, the way and degree in which God acts on man through man. Intercourse with and learning from deeply spiritual souls—discipleship—has always been realised by Christianity, indeed by all the higher religions, as a real means whereby the spiritual life is propagated and fed; and such souls have always been regarded as existing not for the sake merely of their own relation with God, but as givers of new life to the world. Spiritual fruitfulness, a creative personality, according to the mystics, is the real guarantee of union with God. Nor need we limit such intercourse to those of our own generation. That spiritual reading which the Church ranks with meditation as an aid to a healthy inner life, really involves a life-giving contact through their books

with the great religious souls of the past. It is one aspect of that great and still dimly realised fact of the interpenetration of spirits, the immense extent to which, even as regards the deepest things, we affect and depend on each other, which has never yet been given its rightful position in the psychology of religion. The doctrine of the Communion of Saints, and the belief in their continued influence, witness to this truth. As we owe to the special powers of artists our awareness of many subtle beauties revealed by them, so we owe at least some of our spiritual apprehensions to the special insights and experiences of great souls, whose perceptions were not for themselves alone, and whose loving spirits have set countless other spirits on fire. Man's spiritual sensitiveness, at least at his present stage of development, is very unequally distributed. It seems as though certain souls are brought forth in order to be "the eyes of the Body of Christ." Society, in so far as it is Christian, ought surely to treasure and make room for these. The value attached by the Church to intercession and the cloistered career points to a dim recognition of the social service rendered by lives of prayer. A great deal of social Christianity is very carnally minded, and fails to "look beyond the world for Truth and Beauty." But the full redemption of the social order must be intimately connected with the presence within it of a body of devoted contemplatives, working like leaven in the hiddenness and providing ever-open channels for the action of the Spirit of God.

It is on this ground that intercession is so essential

a part of the Christian's work for social reform. It is the knowledge of this power, not our own though operating through us, which should urge us to pray without ceasing. We may use many methods in doing so. For one man intercession will be best accomplished in solitude, when, to use a crude metaphor, holding out one hand to God and the other to the world, he brings them into effective touch. Another will find the same task best fulfilled in corporate and formal petitions. Another will live out his prayer in the activities of daily life, bringing with him everywhere a sensitiveness to God and his fellows. None can dispense with definite self-discipline, with austerity and renunciation and, normally at least, with the habit of regular and ordered devotions. We have to be on guard against forgetfulness not less than against formalism, to create a habit and prevent it becoming only a habit. But the means are relatively unimportant for our present purpose; it is the end, communion with God and the bringing of others into communion, that matters. And in our own lives here as always we shall need repeatedly to start afresh. We are all in measure earth-bound, and for the most part of our lives are hardly conscious of our bondage. If we are to respond to the offer of freedom, the response will involve for most of us at least an agony and a crucifixion, and even then a protracted struggle. Yet whatever effort it may cost, the task is supremely worthy, is indeed essential to our calling. As we are trained to "die daily," we are allowed to discover that we can daily re-arise.

Alongside of our personal prayer-life will go the

duty and joy of corporate worship, a duty and a joy with which none can safely dispense. For however we may analyse the content or interpret the significance of corporate activity, it is a matter of common experience that the "assembling together" of the fellowship bestows upon its members something greater than each could attain in isolation. It is familiar to all who have been in danger or difficulty that the courage of two comrades vastly exceeds the mere sum of the courage of each: they respond far more readily when together to the appeal of their ideal; they become capable of endurance and gallantry which neither alone could achieve. And in a group, as those of us who have seen a battalion going into action can testify, a common soul is developed of which all become conscious, from which even the strongest draw new strength and to which the weakest dare not be false. Something of the kind happens and has always happened in corporate worship. Barriers are broken down; fears and inhibitions removed; sensibilities quickened; impressions deepened; the whole is knit together into a unity greater than the sum of all its parts. In considering corporate sin we have already noted this and urged that it cannot be neglected. In public worship we have the most powerful instrument whereby this common mind or mass-consciousness may be directed to its rightful end. We can sublimate the instinct of the herd by attaching it to the fellowship of the Church; and our Christian life, personal and social, will be enriched and invigorated by the experience.

The fellowship will find many methods adapted

to the expression and development of its corporate life. Denominations and groups of Christians differ widely in the relative importance which they attach to each of these, and to the interpretation which they would place upon them. It is unnecessary and would be inappropriate here to engage in any detailed discussion of the sacraments of the Church, or to set out the varying doctrines associated with varieties of usage.[1] It is enough to repeat our previous conclusion, that some kind of sacramental doctrine is involved in a Christian view of God's nature and purpose and of the workings of grace, and to register the conviction that God comes to man through things and through the senses, and that any wholesale rejection of the material world or any undue etherialising of spiritual experience involves a rejection of one of the chief means by which grace reaches the soul. And if this is the case, it is also clear that for all of us certain special objects and uses draw a spiritual quality from association and memory. The flower from a grave, the photograph of a friend, the hand-clasp of welcome have a significance for us far beyond the general sense in which all things can mediate to us God; for there is in us something which at once connects the symbol with its meaning and makes it effective as a means of communion. Such analogies illustrate one aspect of the sacraments of the Church: they are linked up with the history of Jesus Christ and with an unbroken tradition of Christian usage. If we take them rightly as means,

[1] Many of the members of the Commission for various reasons regard this paragraph as specially inadequate.

not as ends, they bring us into such contact as we can bear with the full and unchanging reality of God. All of us would admit that such means, whether we regard them as symbols or as instruments (and the distinction is possibly one of emphasis rather than of principle), can be misused. Many of us would maintain that it is appropriate, indeed inevitable, in view of His attitude to the material world that Jesus Christ should have appointed and instituted special sacraments, and that the Church, having regard to His sanction, to their historical significance, and to the experience of communion with God through them, should lay stress upon them. Where they are used they take a primary place in the life of the fellowship. For they are essentially the action not of any individual, but of the whole society, celebrating and confirming its union with Him whose Spirit it embodies and the union of its members in Him with one another, dedicating itself and being dedicated for the continuance of His redemptive work.

To sum up, the Church, considered as the typical Christian fellowship, the body held together and inspired by one Spirit, is or should be a primary means of grace to its members and to the social order in which it exists. It gives to the religious intuitions and enthusiasms of the individual men who compose it a social and traditional support. It applies to the necessarily limited experience of the individual the spiritual wisdom of the race, gives him roots in the spiritual history of humanity, provides him with a home and a favouring environment, does or should educate the spiritual conscious-

ness, forming in it by means of regular and ordered devotion the habit of attention to God. In corporate worship, souls are welded together and disposed to receive Christian impressions; in its most perfect achievements the congregation is welded into a unity in which the weak personality is uplifted and braced by fellowship with the stronger, the assertive is humbled by contact with the common experience, and all are conscious of being inspired by the One Spirit. Such a religious employment of the resources of group suggestion may surely be regarded as a genuine means of grace; for it is essential to the Christian position to acknowledge that God works on man through man. Therefore the Churches have a definite part to play in social redemption; not only by corporate witness to Christian ethical demands, but also by such a deepening and enhancing of the institutional religious life as shall infect every individual brought within the circle of its influence with a more ardent passion for fulfilling the purposes of Christ. Ruysbroeck said, "Then only is our life a whole, when work and contemplation dwell in us side by side and we are perfectly in both of them at once;" and the social function of the Church in a Christian world-order involves the provision of the contemplative side of full life, balancing social action by the steadfastness of its corporate attention to, and adoration of, God. It is beyond the scope of this Report, representing all types of Christian feeling, to suggest the ways in which this may best be done. Each branch of the Church of Christ will use the machinery most apt for its purpose. All types of services,

sacramental and other, corporate silence and corporate praise, devotional fellowships, the Retreat movement, are a few of the methods by which this end may be served and new volume and vividness given to the love and devotion of the members. Through the diversity of gifts and of vocations found in those members, grace penetrates, or should penetrate, into every intricate channel of our social organism. The possibility of this depends ultimately on the life towards God of the individual, and of the religious group to which he is, and for his full spiritual health must be, joined. The full redemption of society will only be accomplished when all we mean by "Church" leavens and vitalises all we mean by "State." For, in general, the perfect life requires as an environment the perfect community attentive to God, and in every particular in accord with God; and this means a Christian fellowship capable of becoming the Body, or human expression, of the Spirit of Christ.

CHAPTER V

GOD AND PRESENT CONDUCT

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(A) The Problem

The aim of this Report is to demonstrate that the Christian faith "rightly interpreted and consistently followed gives," and, we would add, can alone give, "the vision and the power essential for solving the problems of to-day." Hitherto we have tried to show that our faith is congruous with what we know of the world in which we live, that it meets and satisfies every requirement of full human life, and that, if the obstacles to its fulfilment cannot be overlooked, and often appear almost insuperable, it provides means by which they have been and can be overcome.

There still remains the problem of its practical applicability. Many who read thus far will feel that they need not be greatly distressed by the three common types of objection to their religion. These objections are: "It is not true: your claims rest upon evidence incapable of justifying them;" or, "It may be true, so far as the evidence goes, but I don't like it: its morality is a slave morality—or (as some would put it) is founded on a subtle and enlightened self-interest;" or, finally, "It is true and beautiful and good, a wonderful dream; but

it merely mocks my weakness : how can I find in it power to fulfil its demands ? " We have still to meet a criticism less radical but more widespread, the criticism of those who say, " It has my entire allegiance as a theory ; and I don't doubt that for some rare souls it is practicable, but under my circumstances, the world being what it is, and I having to live immersed in it, it simply doesn't work. It isn't that I haven't tried or that I do not long to succeed ; but I am compelled over and over again to give up the attempt in face of the facts of life. How can one live out the Christian faith in an unchristian world ? " That is the final problem.

(B) Present Circumstances

As we have pointed out, the conditions of a highly complex civilisation intensify the difficulty, especially when, as in our present situation, that civilisation has been built up by motives and for purposes largely unchristian. Where the social order is simple and unorganised—as it was, relatively speaking, in the first century of our era—the individual was largely free to go his own way. He could withdraw, as the early Christians to a certain extent withdrew, from contact with recognised evil, from professions and practices alien to his own standard of conduct. His needs were few and easily supplied, his dependence on his fellows was a matter of choice rather than of necessity. Later on, when the evil effects of compromise were discovered, it was possible to constitute communities of Christians apart from the world, supplying by their own

labour the food and clothing, buildings and workshops and government, and regulating these in full accord with the spirit of their brotherhood. They might hope to infect others with a similar spirit and so reform the whole civilisation of their age.

Such examples of community life have been followed constantly and with varying success from that time to this. To-day, when we are all conscious that our civilisation has developed with intense rapidity along lines which Christianity has been unable to control, and cannot wholly approve, we may rejoice that experiments towards a more Christian corporate life should be freely made and studied. At the same time it is plain that the mass of our countrymen cannot look for a solution of their problems in such fashion. For them such sheltered virtue is no longer possible. Much as we may deplore its character, we cannot contract out of the social order, and start a community for ourselves in isolation without shirking our responsibility to the world. For in modern days none of us can be self-sufficing. We have broken down the barriers, flinging our railroads and shipping, our communications and our commerce across all the frontiers by which our ancestors were isolated. Only by the maintenance of international trade, only by mass-production and specialisation, can our vast populations be kept alive. To return to the days of small communities and home industry sounds very attractive. What it means is that those who so withdraw from the world are refusing to share in the fight against starvation. It may be that, for the good of humanity, such experiments should be made

on a small scale, just as it is good that certain people should be set free to follow vocations not directly contributing to the physical welfare of the race. But as a permanent or universal solution of the problem, such a course would only be possible if births were diminished to a fraction of their present rate. Utopian dreams of this sort have their value—but not as practicable policies. It is useless to say, "Scrap modern industrialised civilisation: break up your sordid cities: refuse all contact with pagan finance and pagan politics: and return to the simple life of an earlier day." Such advice is equivalent to an order for wholesale massacre. Nor is it obviously the part of a Christian to withdraw his contribution to the support of a system which may indeed be gradually transformed, but cannot be abruptly changed without hideous and almost world-wide suffering.

We have thought it well to state the position vigorously because we believe that here is the real issue before us. Material progress during the last century has brought us into a condition totally unprecedented in history; and to look back wistfully to other times and habits is only valuable if we recognise that our way cannot possibly be an imitation of theirs. Principles remain; and we have tried to state them. Their application differs from age to age, almost from year to year.

It is not the business of this section of our Report to make any detailed statement of the reforms which could now be made or are in the future desirable. Other Commissions accepting the common faith are considering how in face of present circumstances

it can be made operative in the corporate life. But it is necessary for us to speak about the general problem which presses hard upon individual Christians, and upon the Church. How can we and our society, accepting the gospel of Jesus Christ as the sole satisfaction of our heart's desire, as the sole solution of the problems of thought, and the sole inspiration of righteous action, feel, and think and work worthily in a world where the standards of our faith are not, in fact, anywhere fully accepted or followed?

(C) The Double Standard

It is this existence of varying standards of conduct which brings us first into touch with the issue. The Church proclaims to its members certain principles which commend themselves to the normal conscience, and particularly to the idealism of youth; for all normal men desire love and joy and peace, and have their vision of comradeship and service and sacrifice. And then the Christian goes out into the world, into social life or business or a profession, and at once discovers that the principles on which he has been trained are loosely interpreted, if not rejected. He has been taught to be pure; he finds prostitution condoned. He has believed in the golden rule; he finds "smartness" applauded, and the weakest crushed against the wall. He has heard it said "Love your enemies"; the irony of it in a world of class-strife and national hatreds bites into his soul. An inevitable bewilderment paralyses his judgment. On the one side are his ideals and

all he holds sacred, on the other the facts of the workaday life, its codes of morality, its appeal to self-interest, its professions and practices, and its seemingly immovable strength. His first instinct is to cry with the prophets, "Woe to the accursed city," and to shake off the dust of it from his feet. But somehow he must live. He has parents who have sacrificed much for his career. He has friends who do not share his scruples. He has instincts to which the ambitions and struggles and lusts of the life about him make a powerful appeal. Gradually his dreams and hopes and beliefs fade. He accepts the average standards of his calling, and comes to feel that apart from the haunting figure of Christ they would be adequate enough, and even to be content with them as under existing circumstances the best that could reasonably be demanded. He accepts a life of compromise. Is it possible to do otherwise?

In attempting to answer such a question we must first remind ourselves that the Christian is called not only to full membership in a society, the Church whose existence is due to the possession of a common faith and a common love, but that both the member and the fellowship have as their supreme task the fulfilment of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

The Church does not exist solely for the saving of its members' souls—or rather they can only be saved as they take full part in its missionary activity. It is because Christianity can only be fully realised in a wholly Christian world, that it is driven by its own inherent nature to take part in and seek to harmonise with itself those activities and institutions

of the world's life which are at present opposed to it. If the whole world were not essential to Christianity, Christianity need not be essentially concerned to redeem it. There has come to Christians of all denominations in recent years a revival of this conviction, that only in service and sacrifice for the winning of the world can they attain spiritual health; that their duty is not simply mutual edification but active sharing in a great enterprise. Contemplatives and sufferers, teachers and evangelists, laity and ministry, are united in a fellowship of active service: their life is not static but dynamic.

This of itself means that mere abstention from the world, mere refusal to take part in worldly pursuits and callings, can only be justified if it is the surest way to Christianise the whole. To keep ourselves unspotted is only part of our duty; and it is our duty principally not for our own sakes but for God's and for our fellows. Christ Himself came down into the common life of men, sharing its limitations, and in measure accepting its compromises, in order that from within it He might reform and recreate it. He did not forbid to pay tribute to Cæsar, though taxation then as now served many dubious ends. And His Apostles went further in accepting the government and institutions of their time. The early Church, whose withdrawal from the world we have already noted, found itself from the first involved in certain contacts with heathenism, and was perplexed where to draw the line. If military service or public office was impossible for a Christian, what was he to do about mixed

marriages and slavery, marketing and his daily business? And soon, whether we accept or deplore the change, the prohibitions grew fewer, the seclusion less rigid, as Christians more and more took their part in the secular activities, until at last a Christian, in name and intention at least, took his seat upon the Imperial throne.

It is easy enough to condemn Constantine and to point out the abuses which followed the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Empire. There was, beyond dispute, compromise and even secularisation. But to deplore the price then paid for the diffusion of the Gospel is not necessarily to suggest that the principle of adaptation to the circumstances of the time is mistaken. It is pathetic that Christians as they gained number and prestige seemed to lose their purity and lower their standards. But though individuals failed, the general process was inevitable if the Master's command to teach all nations were to be obeyed. We shall naturally form different judgments as to the gains and losses recorded in the history of the Church according to our views of its nature and authority; but few will doubt that in a very real sense its life and progress has been guided by God's Spirit, and that in refusing to withdraw its members wholly from contact with the world, it was acting in accordance with its Master's precepts and example. And throughout its history, even in periods of general laxity and decay, there have never been wanting those who stood out against dominant evil, and in the name of Christ recalled His followers to their allegiance.

We conclude, therefore, that there is no sanction for a general rule of withdrawal from secular affairs, that our duty is to be in the world though not of it, and that to fulfil this involves the constant effort to realise God's will, and much prayer and thought as to how best to follow it. If this be granted, then each one of us will have to face problems of conduct which will strain our faculties to the uttermost, problems for the solution of which each must face a great responsibility. It is true that the individual here as elsewhere does not stand alone, that as a member of the Church he has the support of the moral witness and stored experience of the fellowship. Naturally he will strive to regulate his life in accordance with the discipline of the society to which he belongs, and will use the help, the spiritual strength and practical guidance, that he can obtain from it. But even so, in the last resort, his own conscience must be the supreme authority. Rules and tradition may be an invaluable help; and the verdict of the Church has a sanction which none dare lightly dismiss. But in whatever proportion we adjust the individual and the collective responsibility (and Christians differ widely in the emphasis which they lay upon each), the discovery of the right course of action is in certain circumstances extraordinarily difficult.

(D) The Nature of Compromise

To illustrate the difficulty we need only refer to the problem of the Christian's attitude towards

war, and to the searchings of heart which many of us experienced in 1914. War indeed presents a case typical of a vast number of others, where the individual has either to refuse participation in admitted evil at the expense of breaking the bonds of fellowship and national obligation, or to share the consequences of corporate evil by taking part in what he believes to be in itself wrong. But the question of war is being fully treated elsewhere; and before trying to reach a conclusion it is well to mention certain general categories under which cases of compromise commonly fall.

1. First, we may place the position of the Christian who finds his citizenship involving him in duties and obligations of which his conscience disapproves; he is called to serve on a jury and has doubts about the Christian character of the penal system; or to send his children to an elementary school where he knows that the moral tone is low; or to pay taxes to an exchequer some of whose activities seem contrary to the Spirit of Christ. The New Testament exhorts him to "be in subjection to the powers that be." To what extent is he to carry his obedience?

2. Next there is a group of problems turning on action in a representative capacity.

(*a*) One such case is that involved in representative government in communities not wholly Christian. The representative is obviously limited in his official action by the public opinion of his electors: he cannot disregard their wishes and follow simply his personal convictions: by retaining his position he may be able to do valuable service to religion, yet to retain it he will frequently be called

upon to support policies of which he does not altogether approve.

(*b*) Somewhat similar is the problem raised for every elector. As a Christian he must desire to see the Christian standard accepted in legislation. Yet legislation must be adjusted to public opinion, since its effectiveness depends not simply on the enlightened views of a section of the populace, but upon the consent of the whole body. If a proposed law, although Christian, would be too far above the general level to command support, ought he to urge it? And in any case should he enforce Christian precepts upon an unchristian or partially Christian people, and compel a minority to obey against its will?

(*c*) The problem of representative action is not confined to politics. A business man who owes a duty to his shareholders and to his staff and to the public: a subordinate who is under obligations to his firm and yet doubts if their goods are fairly priced or of specified quality: a barrister called to defend a client of whose guilt he is morally certain: a cleric who loves his Church, and yet questions the truth of a point of doctrine: all these and many other similar cases raise the same issues. The individual would take one line; the same individual as representing interests other than his own is not free to do so. It is easy to cite instances where the alternatives seem so exactly balanced that to discriminate with certainty between them is almost impossible.

3. Even more universal are the conflicts between personal ideals and group loyalties, conflicts which

arise in some form in almost every family. The parent has certain hopes for his child: to what point is he justified in compelling obedience? The child cherishes a definite purpose, but to fulfil it will be to neglect home ties: which should be sacrificed? A man has a young family and works in a shop: he is asked to connive at fraud, and if he refuses will be dismissed: which cross is he called to bear? Examples can be multiplied indefinitely.

4. Finally, there is the personal problem. A man has two courses open to him. One offers definite Christian service: he desires it, but in view of his character and record is convinced that he cannot worthily fulfil it. The other is as definitely a second-best, but is within his capacity and will give his particular qualities larger scope. If he is a man of one talent rather than of ten, his restrictions cannot be neglected and may occasion very grave perplexity.

We have stated details at disproportionate length because the matter is perhaps the most generally perplexing in the whole range of Christian conduct. As we have previously noted, there is no hard-and-fast rule, and every case must be considered on its merits and in terms not of law but of personal relationships. Hence what is right for one man might conceivably be wrong for another, even if the circumstances were identical. This may seem to involve mere casuistry, and to leave to the individual conscience an intolerable burden of responsibility. He cannot, and should not, shrink from the obligations of his liberty. But certain principles will help to a right judgment.

(E) Principles of Conduct

It will be noticed that in every case the issue is one between conflicting loyalties and arises out of the fact that each one of us belongs or can belong to many different groups. As a member of the State, of the firm, of the family, and of the Church, certain obligations are laid upon him, and between these where they are incompatible he has to choose. To do so is to consider how best to adapt means to ends. As a Christian, his end is the redemption of the world, the building up of the body of Christ; and he, like St. Paul, must judge which means will achieve this end. Hence personal motives, save as they affect his own capabilities, are ruled out. "What wouldest thou have me to do?" must be the substance of his prayer. Self-knowledge and thought, and sympathy for the needs and well-being of others will be required: without them prayer, the opening-up of the problem in the presence of God, will be superficial and unreal.

1. *Self-knowledge.*—We urge the necessity for self-knowledge because the influence of selfish instincts is, as psycho-analysis has once more demonstrated, extraordinarily subtle and strong, and nothing is easier than to mistake our own sub-conscious desires for the guiding of the Divine Spirit. It is our duty to examine ourselves sincerely and unreservedly in the light of our vision of God and with every help that the guidance of the Church and the advice of friends can give, stripping ourselves of ambitions and fears, and of regard for material considerations, whether they affect ourselves only

or our family and colleagues. We must know ourselves, our limitations and our endowments, our aptitudes and our temptations. We must repent and dedicate ourselves, being what we are, to God. Realising His presence and concentrating solely upon worship, we shall see ourselves and our perplexities from a different angle and in relation to the one true goal of life. Difficulties will be resolved and the complexities disentangled if and as far as we recognise that no other consideration whatsoever, neither personal reputation, nor domestic obligations, nor business ties, nor national interests, can be put in the first place, and that we are set in these lesser relationships solely in order that in them we may serve His Kingdom. We shall not attach less but far more and truer importance to the claims of others upon us, because we are seeking first God's will for us and for them.

In cases of conflicting obligations such as we are considering our uncertainty too frequently arises from a conflict of motive in ourselves : one group of instincts pulls us in one direction, while others resist and draw us elsewhere. If we can settle the war in our own personalities by bringing all the elements of our nature into harmony with God, we shall have simplified the issue, and shall see clearly what we ought to do. And as we grow in grace, as our characters become more Christ-informed, our sensitiveness to God will develop, and His guidance will become ever more real and more imperative. Even those who have made but little progress in the Christian life can look back upon earlier times in which conduct now intolerable

to the conscience was hardly challenged, when we accepted blindly or with plausible excuses motives now recognised and inevitably rejected, when we were distressed by problems and dallied with temptations which have now wholly ceased to distract our course. Others remain : the struggle still continues ; but in the light of what has been we can engage in it humbly and with hope, confident that in Christ all things are or should be possible for us, that He whom we have known will not leave us unaided.

2. *Sympathy*.—The quickening of our Godward sensibilities brings also a deepened sympathy with our fellow-men. Our lives are for the most part influenced by abstract principles, by law and custom and convention, and the standards prevalent in our circle. We find it easy to order our conduct by reference to a rule ; such and such things are not done : such and such persons are beyond the pale. Rules, however mistaken, have their place in life : " the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ " ; but for the Christian, the discipline of simple obedience is only preliminary, and if he presses on towards perfection will be less and less valuable to him. For, as we have urged, it is with persons and personal relationships, not with abstractions or general principles, that he is concerned. Sympathy with the particular needs and characters of those who will be affected by his action will be a potent factor in God's guidance. For it is his duty not merely to consider his own soul's welfare, but to correct the motive and achieve the result of self-development by seeking always how he may best minister to the highest needs of others. " For their

sakes I sanctify myself," strikes a note characteristic of the whole method of Jesus; and when St. Paul has to consider cases of compromise submitted by his converts it is to the interests of the "weaker brother" and the well-being of the whole community that he turns in giving his answer. We are not here to please ourselves but to serve God and our brethren.

It is plain, therefore, that in such cases we must accept nothing which will destroy or endanger our sonship to God or the eternal welfare of any of His children. For it can never be God's will that any of His family should do evil or attempt to be less than perfect in the particular conditions of each case. And we cannot do His will by using means contrary to it. Compromise is always wrong if it means the acceptance of any line of action which is not absolutely the best possible in the circumstances. Christ's standard in such matters is rigidly uncompromising: "Whoso loveth his life shall lose it," and "Whoso loveth parents or friends more than Me cannot be My disciple." He knew that to follow such an ideal would involve in some shape or other the bearing of a Cross. Here as elsewhere the Cross is the condition of discipleship.

(F) The Way of the Cross

In claiming that each one of us is called to be a partaker in the sufferings of Christ, we would utter first a word of warning. Jesus Himself did not provoke, indeed definitely avoided, a crisis until His teaching of the disciples was completed. Only

when Peter had confessed Him to be the Christ did He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, and begin to warn His followers that a cross, not a crown, awaited Him there. We are called to spend and sacrifice our lives without stint, keeping back no part of the price; but we are called not only to lay them down but to lay them out in His service to the fullest and truest advantage. There is in some of us a temper that is merely quixotic. Such people are inclined to tilt at windmills; to suspect evil in every normal activity, and think that to be "agin' the Government" is necessarily to be on God's side; even to enjoy the consciousness of being persecuted and live in a series of cheap martyrdoms. That is not Christ's way; nor can we take up His Cross for motives of subtle self-flattery.

Nor can we look upon the Cross merely as an unpleasant episode, a temporary pain for the sake of future bliss, an investment which prudence recommends. If in reality our motive is the desire for reward, then one thing is certain, that we shall neither deserve nor attain it. That crucifixion leads to resurrection, that those who give up houses and lands and kinsmen and friends for the Kingdom's sake receive an hundredfold, is utterly true; but they do so just in proportion to the extent to which their sacrifice is for the Kingdom and not for themselves. Our motive must be love, not self-interest; our gain will be the discovery that the Cross itself is the supreme joy because upon it we are with Him who for us was nailed there.

This is indeed the central fact. We use words like sacrifice and suffering; but the experience of

the Christian makes him doubtful of their current appropriateness. As we learn to love, as we come to say in reverence and sincerity, "May my name perish, so His will be done," the Cross becomes inevitable. If Christ was crucified, we must be crucified with Christ. The constraint of love leaves us no choice; we can no other. And love turns into joy, love compensates and rewards an hundredfold. We are with Him, sharing in His work, filling up in our small measure what was lacking in His sufferings, and entering into a peace which passes earthly understanding.

"To do God's will." Those who can live out Christ's prayer spontaneously, sincerely, wholeheartedly, have attained their end. Difficulties no longer perplex them: like their Master, they are not worried about the morrow and can deal unerringly with the problems and evils of the day: like their Master, they have lost the fear of "them that kill the body and after that have nothing they can do": like their Master, they can face the Cross serenely and unfalteringly: for, like their Master, they can take long views, loving wisely, and not shrinking from driving the sword into a mother's heart when love, austere and compassionate and holy, bids them: like their Master, they can walk among the snares and subtleties of temptation undisturbed, and resolve life's complexities at touch. For He is in them, and they in Him. To them to live is Christ.

We have dared to set down what we conceive to be our calling. None dare imagine that he fulfils it. St. Paul, even in the Epistle which breathes most fully the joy of self-surrender, though he can

say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," must also say, "Not that I count myself to have apprehended . . . but I press toward the mark." We shall be very slow to claim progress or to judge others, or to set ourselves as guides to the blind. For few of us have suffered unto death; and our vision of God, however dim, forces us to our knees. But it is because we believe with utter conviction that here lies the road to joy and knowledge and power, to the re-creation of the whole life of man, that we can go forward, bearing ever before our eyes the picture so characteristic of the Christendom of to-day—"They were in the way going up to Jerusalem . . . and Jesus went before them. . . . And they were amazed. . . . And they that followed were afraid."[1] He still leads on—to the New Jerusalem of our desire: He bewilders and perplexes us; for His way is not our way, nor are His thoughts our thoughts; and the little groups falter and fear, as the shadow of the Cross falls over them. They fear, but yet they follow: for He leads and love constrains.

(G) The Fruits of the Spirit

Such an appeal will seem to many readers emotional and vague. In religion, as in other vital interests, phrases once fresh and full of meaning lose their brightness and value by constant use. It is common experience that those who are continually hearing and reading St. Paul's descriptions of the indwelling

[1] Mark x. 32.

Christ never realise that they refer to actual happenings within a human soul, and in lesser measure are common to multitudes of believers. The combination of accurate scholarship and sympathetic imagination which can understand and interpret for to-day the language of the first century is the more needed because the texts are so familiar. Such words as "I am crucified with Christ," "I die daily," "I live, yet not I; Christ lives in me," were written as a plain statement of their author's deepest convictions and most vivid experience; they have become through the ages stereotyped formulæ, mysterious rather than literally correct, and distorted by a mass of alternative and often tawdry interpretations. The stark grandeur and truth of the change which the Apostle records have been softened and weakened until even crucifixion has come to be applied to acts of trivial sacrifice or self-conscious renunciation. It is necessary for us, therefore, to expand our statement of the way of the Cross and to show the momentous and eminently practical character of the demand made upon those who would follow it.

If in love as we have defined it there is power to change the very stuff and substance of our natures into the likeness of God, if by it we are enabled to have the mind of Christ, this will involve, as we have seen, a radical renewal of our attitude towards God, towards man, and towards human society. The necessity for this change is inherent in the whole theology and organisation of the Church, and its practical significance is too often misunderstood or neglected. We believe that its accomplishment

in the individual and in society is the only solid foundation for Christian citizenship. For it there are no substitutes. Other reforms are at best palliatives and temporary measures. It is the soul, the values and outlook of humanity, that must be altered, not merely its environment and its way of life. For action, if it is to be true and consistent, can only be so in proportion as it is the outcome of right attitude and motive. This is the issue which mankind is unwilling to face. We are all ready within limits to change our behaviour; we are not ready to change ourselves or to give free play to influences that would change us. The greater difficulty of the task is at once the cause and the consequence of our unwillingness. The debasing of the standards of Christ and the encouragement of cheap alternatives for self-oblation have so obscured the simple and complete Gospel that even among Christians its scope and character are hardly ever realised. We cannot here do more than outline and illustrate something of what is involved in discipleship.

To regard God, as Jesus did, as always and wholly the Father, means not only a ruthless rejection of much which passes for Christian thinking, but a revolutionary change in our relations with our fellow-creatures. Many of the cherished convictions so dear to the hearts and so familiar in the hymns of Christians will not bear examination if God is Love. Many of our own prayers with their taint of formalism and of self-seeking are plainly not the utterances of a child of God. If we were amazed and horrified at the emergence in time of war of

primitive, tribal and national deities, this was nothing more than an exposure of our failure to appreciate in more normal circumstances the magnitude of the revelation in Christ. To grasp and hold and use continuously the implications of the first two words of the Lord's Prayer is too often immeasurably beyond us.

But it is in its consequences upon our relationship to God's family that our failure is most apparent. For "the Mind of Christ" challenges and overthrows every conventional opinion and every worldly judgment. What is involved in uncompromising discipleship is a change so vast and so universal that to imagine and describe it in its fullness is and must be beyond our power. Only those whose lives are hid with Christ in God can share and tell the sweep of its effects. We will only attempt to put down a few of the more obvious results in simple shape, taking the three main categories of personality, standards of value and fellowship.

1. Personality

In realising the nature of God we cannot but realise His relationship to our fellows and consequently their kinship with ourselves. "All ye are brethren" is the necessary corollary of "One is your Father." Indeed if our attitude towards God is to be in any measure Christian, we shall best test its development by observing its effects upon our conduct towards others. So far as we are envious or critical, patronising or servile to them, so far we may be sure that the Divine Father is being given by us something less

than His full character. He is our Judge; and it follows that some are acquitted before Him and others condemned—and we feel at liberty to anticipate His sentences. He is our King: prerogatives belong to His favoured subjects, penalties to the rebels—ought we not to help Him in bestowing them? He is our Friend—intimacies proper to us are refused to others—we can show His displeasure as proof of our own privilege. Only then, if these lesser attributes are expanded and brought into proportion by union with the concept of Fatherhood, can we find the true basis for the brotherhood of man, and learn to be, and to behave as, members of His family.

Herein lies the stimulus and the guide to social reform. If God is partial, if some men are His chosen and others His enemies, then it may be just that some should be outcasts and others should prosper like green bay trees. On such a doctrine social evil may be only an anticipation or reflection of Divine judgment. We may go on in our self-satisfaction content that men and women less blessed than ourselves should live under conditions which degrade and defile. Nothing is more congenial to the national character of our countrymen than to give a person or an opinion a label, and to store it in its proper pigeon-hole. We talk of profiteers or prostitutes, Bolshevists or atheists or the idle rich; and the words conjure up familiar caricatures. But the *real* men and women so dismissed are not caricatures: beneath the stains of the far country with which they and we are disguised are the features of prodigal sons and daughters, whose

underlying nature and relationship to God should be, and on His side are, the same as our own. And when once this fact strikes home to us, then they can no longer be dismissed. Their surroundings and opportunities, their temptations and struggles, their disease of body and soul are matters of vital concern. She is my sister; it is intolerable that men should use her so. He is my brother; and I, in part, his keeper. Each individual one among them, however twisted or self-willed, is of the family; and we cannot, for God will not, cast him off.

Within God's family there are many groupings. We are linked close with some; others hardly touch us; multitudes unnumbered are wholly outside our range. Our intimacies are not to be neglected or merged in a general and insipid benevolence. Rather from the love of parent and partner and child we are to learn ever more fully the sanctity and splendour of our birthright. The joy and graces of our earthly home will teach us new lessons of our Father and of His great household; and the sympathy trained in the narrow circle will deepen and expand until love, the fixed sentiment of compassion, colours our whole selves and affects all our most casual contacts. To feel our kinship, to know and approve its meaning, to act upon its reality, these are the firstfruits of Christ's Spirit. And our first task is to accept God's Fatherhood and personalise by it our relations with His family. Only if we have in us a passion for the eternal well-being of our brothers and sisters, only when we feel in our hearts the truth of Christ's words, "Ye have done it to the least of these . . . ye have done it

unto Me," only as their sorrows and joys, shames and triumphs become our own, will the energy sufficient to redeem be generated and set free.

The effect of such a recognition of brotherhood must be to produce a simplification in the Christian's way of life. Luxury, inconsiderate enjoyment, self-gratification regardless of others are a flat denial of the faith. When a great cause grips and unites the community, all merely personal indulgence is recognised and condemned as bad taste and bad morality. If during the war the knowledge of the sufferings of the soldiery and the need of the nation could create a voluntary austerity and self-denial, the present knowledge of the tragedy of unemployment and of the starvation of Europe should be not less potent to stir the imagination and enforce simplicity in food and clothing and furniture and amusements. If I am in any real sense a member of Christ, I cannot lightly squander money and time which might be the means of life to others : " How can I best serve the welfare of God's family ? " should be the guiding consideration in all matters of personal expenditure and effort. My work may demand a measure of comfort and equipment if it is to be effective. But, for most of the well-to-do, what is really luxury often masquerades as necessity. It is easy to make excuses for one's right to pleasure and for the securing of advantages for one's children—and in so doing to deny God's Fatherhood and forget the need of His world.

Similarly for the Church, when once the claim of religion to influence the whole of life and to possess a message for all men is admitted, a sense of

proportion will be recovered. At present too many Christian congregations spend the bulk of their energies and resources in providing spiritual luxuries for the favoured few. The world-wide mission is obscured by the trivialities of ecclesiastical interests. Nice, but eminently petty, points of procedure and organisation and conduct of services and the administration of finance arouse the keenest interest and the most strenuous partisanship. The great mass of the people, of those common people whom Jesus loved and who heard Him gladly, is forgotten, and then repelled by what they regard not unjustly as a denial of brotherhood.

2. Standards of Value

If personality is " the holiest fact in the universe," if what we are matters vastly more than what we do, then a drastic modification if not a reversal of the scale of values accepted by the world must follow. Save in Christ, the worth of life is all but universally measured by its success, by the attainment of great position or even great wealth, by the accomplishment of great deeds or even great crimes, by the production of much work, by its fame or notoriety. It is indeed natural and right that those who have served humanity well should be held in grateful remembrance ; but that the best service of humanity qualifies for reputation and honour is in most cases simply untrue. Any student of history will be at times amazed at the false ideas of greatness which permeate and are fostered by it ; and those who have met men reputed great often

share his wonder. If the supreme reality is God and if life's true goal is knowledge of Him, on what is the claim of greatness founded? Surely if to walk humbly with God is still man's highest calling, the good men living peaceably in their habitations who have left no memorial are as likely to have fulfilled it as those who have captured a city. Status and wealth, education and discovery, science and civilisation, the family and the nation are means, not ends, and are valuable just so far as they are able to give fuller and more abundant life, to make us what God means us to be; and opportunity brings responsibility, and ascent a greater peril of falling. If the good Christian is a more Godlike man than the good pagan, the bad Christian is the Pharisee, the sinner whom Christ most severely condemned. *Corruptio optimi pessima.*

This matter is of vital importance to our subject. Our heritage and the habit of generations have made the assumption of false standards almost inevitable. They are ingrained in the fibre of our being; and their effects are as subtle as they are widespread. To take a common instance. Nothing is more urgently necessary or more plainly Christian than that men and women should understand and use in full and equal partnership the fact of sex. The special problems of sex-life are dealt with elsewhere.[1] Here we are concerned with it only as illustrating the present subject. Sex obviously involves a difference, the plainest natural difference of function. The commonplace definition "man subdues the

[1] *Cf.* Report on the Relation of the Sexes.

world, woman maintains the home," however expressed, represents a broad truth. If this difference is to be rightly appreciated and a true co-operation attained, a clear perception of the common goal, the Kingdom of God, and of each other's contribution to it, is essential. And at present the persistence of a false standard is an almost unsurmountable obstacle. For the world rewards and reckons great the work of man, his inventions and business, his efficiency and intellectual prowess, his triumphs of ambition and energy, and lightly regards the work of woman, the expression of her personality in creating home-life, in forming children, in tending and sustaining others, in worshipping God. And the world's view is that of the men and unhappily also of many of the women in it. Few husbands, at least among those who work for their living, regard the housewife as equally a worker. To them the home and the children, the garden and the party of friends are essentially relaxations, amusements, not labour. To see their wives' work, with its lack of regular hours, its close relation to personal interests, its simplicity and its charm as equally great, equally exacting, equally enriching, with their own, demands of them a sympathy and a freedom from tradition rare and difficult. And women, in identifying equality of worth with equality of function, in their desire to be "just like men" and their revolt against the dullness of domesticity, have come near to a capitulation to the prevalent standards. We do not wish to set one sex's function against another or to deny that they are overlapping as well as complementary : but

to pay lip-service to equality while half-unconsciously assuming the superiority of the male is to make effective comradeship, and with it the whole progress of the race, well-nigh impossible.

And what is true of the most fundamental of functional differences is true, as has often been pointed out, of all lesser distinctions. There must be, if there is to be an ordered society, some who rule and some who obey orders; there must be grades of work as there are grades of ability. But at present in the body politic the uncomely parts are without honour; difference of function is regarded as equivalent to difference of worth. The collier, the coal-merchant and the coal-owner are all the children of their Father, and the true end of life is for them all the service of the family. All of them are doing useful work; can we maintain that their respective earnings bear any fair relation either to their skill or to their value to the community? At present honour and power depend firstly upon what we have, then, but to a much less degree, upon what we do; they bear hardly any relation to the one thing of supreme importance, which is surely what we are. The inherent and equal value of each personality is ignored, if not denied; and so long as this is the case, so long as men renounce brotherhood by their accepted standards of value, all talk of democracy and of the dignity of labour will sound a note of irony.

In a rightly ordered society it should be possible for every member to see his own function as a vocation, that is, to feel that in fulfilling it he was satisfying the highest need of his own nature and

promoting to the best of his power the accomplishment of the Divine purpose. Work, however menial and monotonous, if motived by love and performed for the sake of an accepted end, becomes a spiritual ministry : from it we gain the satisfaction and happiness of freely offered service : whatever sacrifice it involves will bring with it an enrichment of life. For those who have the opportunity to choose a career suited to their capacities and in accordance with their ideals, it is possible to regard their life's work, whatever it is, as a calling : they can feel that they are in their proper place in the scheme of things. The gravest indictment of our present civilisation is based upon the plain fact that vocation in this sense is possible for so few. Work for the mass of mankind is apportioned not by choice but by necessity, and its relation to the common welfare, or indeed to any worthy purpose, is hardly recognisable. Christianity demands that all men should see their lives as lives of service to God's Kingdom. In many cases, even of the dullest, least rewarded work, it is only lack of imagination that prevents it from being universally recognised as a ministry. But in many others to talk of vocation is mere cant ; work is unrelieved drudgery to be done because it earns money, not because it either serves a great cause or expresses the personality of the worker, and it is apt to become in such cases morally and spiritually degrading. It is not for us here to discuss details or to consider how far certain tasks must at present be inevitably mechanical and uninspiring : but we must point out that in so far as men and women cannot consider their function

in society as a vocation, the requirements of Christianity remain for them unfulfilled. If we realise the Fatherhood of God and our relationship with the rest of His family we shall be bound to resent and strive to overthrow conditions which make it difficult for our brethren to walk worthy of their calling. So long as the advantages of civilisation are obtained at the cost of stunted bodies and impoverished souls, so far as our social order is dependent upon what is, in fact if not in name, slave labour, we cannot be content to remain indifferent or inactive.

Recognising the futility of mere emotion and the need for wisdom to direct feeling and initiate action, Christians will set themselves to think out what is involved in the standards of value laid down by their Master and to discover how these can be accepted and reproduced in the organisation of corporate life. It is as our passion for persons is examined and studied and interpreted by our minds, and a drastic revision of our standards undertaken and accepted, that it can be guided into useful channels and applied to the task that awaits us. Passion of itself is merely explosive; if undisciplined by knowledge, by the conscious effort to challenge habits of thought and to reject what is inconsistent with man's true end, it is dangerous and may well be disruptive.

Here again a change of outlook will imply, and its sincerity will be tested by, a change of practice. If the supreme purpose in life is the service of God, then we must examine anew our personal motives and habits, our behaviour to others, and our ideals for corporate life. The question which should

determine our conduct will be not "What is best for me?" nor "What will the world say?" but "What is God's will and what would He have me do?" To ask it is at once to challenge not only our outlook but our actions. We must either dismiss it as unpleasant or unanswerable (and in either case little will remain of our Christian profession), or we must be prepared for serious and disturbing thought and highly inconvenient action. There are some, indeed very many, who sincerely desire and strive to accept Christ's standards. But it is idle to pretend that the mass of Christians face their responsibilities fairly or consistently or attempt to apply these standards to the whole field of corporate life.

3. Fellowship

It is as the power of passion is connected with the engine of an intelligent policy, and as this in turn is made operative upon the whole mass of the community, that progress will be achieved. We have said that the starting-point of Christian citizenship must be a radical change of soul in the Christian; but soul and conduct are so closely interrelated, that the change, while not created by the influence of environment, can never be independent of it. We cannot reach our own fullest consecration, let alone use that consecration effectually, except in fellowship, that is, in an environment which develops the social side of our nature, and relates our personal contribution to the larger life of Christendom, correcting and adjusting the individual experience

of the member by setting it in its place within the body. Each one of us is limited and incomplete—a ray in the spectrum of the many-hued light of God. It is the vocation of humanity to recombine the individual colours into the whiteness realised in Christ, so that every shade may take its true and proportionate place and the world reflect not a patchwork of tints but a unity of radiance.

We have already noted how vastly the energies of a group exceed the mere total of individual contributions. It was to a band of men and women consecrated by the agony of Calvary and reunited to their Lord by the Resurrection, and convinced of His oneness with God by the Ascension, that the Spirit of power came. It will be in fellowship that those who have suffered and seen and understood will be enabled to act. So long as the first disciples stood alone, each united only with his Lord, and each jealous of his fellows and eager for precedence, even their loyalty to Jesus was weak and easily shattered. When once they had discovered one another and the call to definite service they found in a comradeship of adventure a power immeasurable and irresistible. When the Church sets herself to fulfil in action the commission of her Master, she will not want for strength. *Vires acquirit eundo.* It is in taking up the task of realising upon earth the gospel of the Rule of God that she will also realise for all her members fullness and unity of life.

And it is in such united energy that both the individual and the community discover the confirmation of their faith. Human love, so long as it

affects only the feelings and the mind, is at the mercy of circumstance; it is only when the lovers test their mutual passion and understanding in the sharing of activities, it is only as they live and work and suffer together, that the bond between them becomes permanent and secure. So in Christ; we may love Him in bursts of emotion, or love Him by study and thought; and our faith may be real, but is unstable and incomplete. We shall only know Him in whom we have believed as we carry our faith into the crises of our history and as we reveal to ourselves its reality and His efficacy by putting His precepts into practice. And so again in the Church, our fellowship will be a thing of sentiment and theory until we begin to act together and to learn the joy and confidence of the comradeship which has dared and struggled and achieved. The weakness of our Christendom lies not so much in our lack of devotion or in our intellectual doubts, as in the fact that we so rarely transfer our faith from a passive to an active existence. When we venture to undertake practical service, our whole attitude to God is altered; what was a vision and a belief becomes a certainty; the theory is found to fit the facts; God's way works. Our moments of conscious communion, if they stood alone, might be delusion; our reasoning, however profound, can never carry complete conviction; only when we have accepted the risk of acting upon our faith do we find in the victories and in the defeats the certainty of His presence, of His love and power, and of our unity in Him.

If Christians, the great multitude in the land

who are numbered in the membership of the Church, could be so filled with the Spirit as to forget the things that are behind, the memories of past failure and past quarrels, and realising their opportunity and God's power to press on towards perfection, the perfection which can only be won by service and sacrifice, their influence would be literally immense. There is everywhere a desire for the Kingdom of God, an abundance of good-will, a readiness for adventure and self-oblation. In action, enthusiastically demanded and intelligently planned, lies the fulfilment of our duty and the vindication of our faith. A time of crisis is evidently awaiting us, a time when we must judge and be judged, must accept or deny. May God grant that in these great days His Church, "hearing a clear call to practical action, may find courage to obey."

Herein lies the urgency of our appeal. If the Christian fellowship will but follow up with united action its common emotion and its common study, it may or may not save the world; at least it will deliver its own soul—that is, its profession will become real, its convictions immutable, its consecration complete. It will achieve the triumph of faith when through penitence and resurrection, in hazard and peril, by suffering and endurance, knowing nothing save Christ and Him crucified, it enters into love's unity and love's power and peace and becomes the Church indeed.

It is, then, for a full and general acceptance of all that is involved in the Christian Gospel that we would plead. As individual disciples and as His Church we are called to comradeship in adventure,

to a life of love and service, of inward peace and outward struggle, of sacrifice and suffering. In the light of the Cross earthly standards of value are transmuted: ambition and success, anxiety and disaster, the rewards and penalties of this world, look tawdry and cheap beside the story of Jesus Christ; and those who have found the pearl of great price have not hesitated to sell all else for its possession. In the cause of social righteousness we believe that the first duty of the Christian and of the Church is not with programmes or policies, not with acquiescence or with revolution, but with God: we believe that it is only the God-possessed and God-inspired who can rightly and radically reform themselves and the world: we believe that such reform, initiated and carried out in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, would bring its own commendation to multitudes of men and women who are now lifting blind hands above the turmoil and groping for a deliverer: we believe that the time is ripe for a renewed acceptance among Christians of the full responsibilities of their Master's commission to His followers, that those who accept it will find His strength sufficient for them, and that in the world of to-day a widespread spiritual awakening will follow.

It is our immediate task to try to discover the significance of the present, to try to learn and publish abroad the truths new and old which God is now pressing on the attention of men, to try to carry forward the tasks which God is laying on the conscience of our generation. In entering upon our Conference we cannot do better than recall the noble words in which, in the midst of the confusion

and darkness of a dying world-order, St. Augustine summoned all who bore the name of Christian to co-operate in the Divine work of giving light to the world :

" Let us not leave Thee alone to make, in the secret of Thy knowledge, as Thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness ; let the children of Thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times ; for the old order is passed and the new arises ; the night is spent, the day is come forth ; and Thou shalt crown the year with Thy blessing, when Thou shalt send forth labourers into Thy harvest, sown by other hands than theirs, when Thou shalt send forth new labourers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet."

Signed :—

Walter H. Moberly (*Chairman*).
James Vernon Bartlet.
David S. Cairns.
*A. F. Day.
Lucy Gardner.
H. L. Jackson.
W. R. Maltby.
John Oman.
Hubert M. Oxon :
David Phillips.
Oliver C. Quick.
Charles E. Raven.
James Alex. Robertson.

E. K. Talbot, C.R.
Evelyn Underhill.
H. G. Wood.

* *Note of Reservation.*—It will be evident to anyone at all familiar with Catholic Theology that it is not possible for me to adopt several of the statements in the Report on the Nature of God, or to recommend them to others as being in my judgment sound or orthodox. At the same time, the document is a valuable contribution to religious thought and calculated to help large numbers less advanced to approach much nearer to the spirit of Christ and Christianity. Appreciating its vital importance in this direction, it would be exceedingly mortifying for me after having collaborated most pleasantly with men and women of great ability and evident sincerity to stand aloof when the results of our labours are on the point of being given to the public. With this reservation, I gladly wish Godspeed to the Report and to the Conference.—A. F. Day, S.J.

The members of the Commission who, having co-operated in the preparation of the above Report, attach their signatures, do so as individuals and in no way commit the Churches or Societies of which they are members. The acceptance of the Report by a signatory denotes agreement with the general substance of the Report, but not necessarily with every detail.

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